

For Immediate Release



## High School Students take center-stage in shaping the Sustainable Development Goals at Forthcoming Model UN Conference

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On May 9 -11, 87 High Schools, 1,500 high school students and their 200 advisors from all over the globe including China, Germany, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Qatar, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States of America, will arrive in New York City to attend the Global Classrooms International (GCI) Model UN conference at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in midtown, with the closing ceremony taking place at the General Assembly of the UN Headquarters on May 11.

The United Nations adopted a set of goals in 2015 for the year 2030 including ending poverty and ensuring prosperity for all as part of the new sustainable development agenda called the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDG's). The theme of this year's GCI high school Model UN conference is "Shape the Strategic Development Goals", which invites students to think boldly and innovatively on how to "protect planet Earth, work for peace, establish private-public partnership, and ensure prosperity by 2030," remarked Mr. Elie Samia, Assistant Vice President for Outreach and Civic Engagement for LAU's Division of Student Development and Enrollment Management. "How inspiring," he said, "when a youth leadership program tackles world issues with mental elasticity and intellectual profundity."

During the two-day conference, students form 13 committees, assume the established rules of procedures and debate wide-ranging topics such as *Food Security within the Syrian Humanitarian Crisis* in the World Food Programme(WFP) committee, *Developing a Global Approach to the Integration of the Disabled* in the General Assembly Third Committee, and the *Situation in Rakhine, Myanmar* in the Security Council (SC). LAU has headed the esteemed GCI brand in New York City since 2016. The Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Management at LAU, Dr. Elise Salem, affirmed that these simulation models "epitomize a culture of peace building, leadership development, youth empowerment and civic engagement."

The high schoolers will have the chance to interact with key figures in the fields of diplomacy and international relations, including Dr. Nata Ménade (Executive Director of WHO Office at the UN) and Mr. Eric Olson (Senior Economic Affairs Officer at ECOSOC).

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**For more information, background, and a schedule of events, please contact:**

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## **About Global Classrooms International Middle School Model UN**

[Global Classrooms International Middle School Model UN](#) is the flagship education program of **Lebanese American University (LAU)**. Operated by the United Nations Association of the United States of America for the past 15 years, 2016 ushered in a new era, as the Lebanese American University, a partner of the United Nations Association operating a Model UN program of its own in Beirut since 2005, took over the prestigious Global Classrooms International brand in New York City. Two international conferences in New York City are held, one conference for middle school students and a separate conference for high school students. These conferences have engaged more than 4,000 student leaders coming from around the world, including Ivy League universities, and more than 48,000 high school and middle school students coming from 250 schools in 20 countries. The purpose of the program is to bring the UN culture of global awareness and to bridge the education gap by allowing students to step into the shoes of ambassadors in order to negotiate with fellow delegates current world issues, to resolve conflicts, and to navigate the UN's rules of procedures.

## **About LAU**

The Lebanese American University is a leading nonsectarian private higher education institution based in Lebanon, with a satellite campus in New York City. It was founded by an American missionary in 1835 who established a school for girls during the time of the Ottoman Empire, marking an important shift in education for women in the surrounding region. It operates under a charter from the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York and is accredited by the New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE).

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