



**Gala Dinner Speech of Mr. Alejandro Kuri Pheres
WLCU 18th World Congress
Buenos Aires - Argentina
21 - 24 October 2014**

**His Excellency Mr. Ambassador of Lebanon in Argentina Dr. Antonio Andary
Dear President Michel Douaihi
Dear Presidents Anise Garabet, George Bechara, Joe Baini, Eid Chedraui
Dear members of Congress
Very dear young Committee
Ladies and gentlemen**

I deeply appreciate the love and the trust given to me today to electing me as their President for the next 2 years, granting me the honor to address the fate of the ULCM and Lebanese emigration worldwide, the highest honor that can be a descendant of Lebanese.

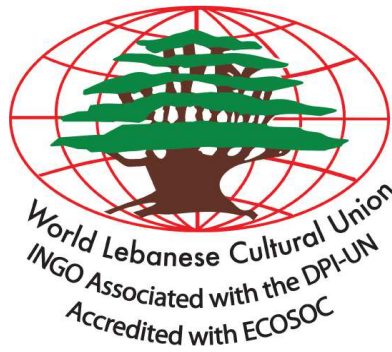
With this honor comes a great responsibility that I will know to comply with intelligence and prudence but also with great energy and heart ahead. Before we talk about our future plans it is my duty to recognize and appreciate the work of those who preceded us, especially when our President Michel Douaihi for their wise works at the head of our institution. His work generated unit and kept the Lebanese Union as undisputed leader of the emigration. **Want to ask an affectionate applause for him.**

I want to also thank our Secretary-General, Tony Kaddisi, our Treasurer Sleiman Asmar and work all the world Vice-Presidents Antonio Arida (Latin America), Said Yazbeck (Europe), Najib Khouri (Africa), Antonio Chahine (Brazil), Elías Kassab (North America) and Joe Arida (Australia).

I affectionately greet our President and Vice President of the Board of Trustees Edward Nahas and Georges Abi Raad.

It is necessary to make recognition to all our regional Presidents Fernando Helo, Roger Hani, François Bou Naaman, Tony Yacoub, and Elie Hekme, our regional Secretaries and our presidents.

I thank in a very special way the work of the Chairman of the Committee of young people Dimas Chantiri recognizing their work in these years and **say hello to all the young people who so fondly keep alive the flame of the Lebanese Union in the world**, especially here in Argentina



And those who take the biggest applause of the night are the organizers of this Congress, in which have made us feel at home receive us with the typical warmth of this blessed land. **I ask for a very affectionate applause to Juan Saliba and all the Organizing Committee.**

The Lebanese Cultural Union world, founded in Mexico for the world, has been dedicated during its 55 years of existence to defend the highest values of the Lebanese people: its independence, its integrity and its autonomy.

This defense has been passionately, despite the enemies of Lebanon, the internal and the external, and has achieved it supported in the feeling and the work of 14 million descendants of Lebanese, exemplary citizens of all countries of the world, who have been a real protection for Lebanon.

In the 2 years we will give a new life to the Lebanese Cultural Union world, with the vision of a generation of descendants of Lebanese of second, third and fourth generation, who deeply love the country of his grandparents and their feelings are not contaminated by internal problems in Lebanon.

A very important task of our union is to defend the civil rights of the Lebanese population regardless of who governs or has power in Lebanon.

The Union was created to coordinate the efforts of the descendants of Lebanese in the world, to preserve the values and Lebanese traditions serving as a link between emigration and the motherland. With the passage of time, the Union has served for different purposes, depending on the socio-political situation in Lebanon, when Lebanon is in a period of social and economic stability, the ULCM serves to promote tourism and commercial activity, as Lebanon passes through periods of instability, the ULCM is who ensures its integrity since the emigrants and their descendants **live outside Lebanon, they have money, and enjoy freedom of expression and thought, with a focus that is apolitical, tending only to defend the human rights of Lebanese citizens without getting involved in their internal affairs.**

Lebanon faces in addition two major problems that have affected it for several decades: the exodus of young people abroad and refugees within the country. The refugee issue has led to a large number of families have to move and leave their properties and belongings against their will to intolerably violate their human rights. The exodus abroad, on the other hand, has been emptying to Lebanon of their human potential and intellectual strength. It is well known that the human factor Lebanese is their real wealth in the absence of natural resources enjoyed by other neighboring countries. In addition to the above, the permanent economic recession has broken the bravery of the Lebanese and their quality of life has deteriorated.



I have the firm conviction that coordinating the efforts of emigration can be front more efficiently all these issues affecting both Lebanon and its inhabitants.

Our plan of action for the next two years is based on 7 key points that many of you already know but that it is necessary to remember them and commit publicly to fulfill them.

1. Create a solid global structure, based on the formal record of all persons and associations that compose it, in strict adherence to the statutes, while maintaining constant communication with all the regional councils and the subsidiaries through official channels, causing cohesion and togetherness.
2. Honoring our quality of non-governmental organization, open a free way of dialogue with the Government of Lebanon, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which reaffirm our global representation. In this vein it will also be necessary to maintain active our relationship with the UN, the Vatican and churches in Lebanon, as well as with the Governments of United States and other potencies.
3. Achieve the economic independence of the ULCM through avant-garde mechanisms that foster the participation of more people from this burden to those who have traditionally assumed this responsibility.
4. Unify the press releases, digital portals and social networks giving the world a single face and a single message, giving an image of unity and professionalism, and avoid creating confusion.
5. Decidedly support the efforts of youth, by encouraging their participation in decision-making. We will continue promoting the visit of groups of young people of all nationalities to Lebanon, the Organization of the contest of Miss Emigrant and the diffusion of the language and Lebanese culture between generations.
6. Give impetus without precedent to the diffusion of culture and the Lebanese traditions through CELIBAL institution recently created in a very short time has managed to position itself based on work and creativity.
7. And finally, promote tourist, cultural and commercial exchange between countries of emigration and Lebanon to help our motherland to regain the splendor of other times, causing an improvement in the Lebanese economy which is quickly reflected in a better quality of life for their inhabitants.



Before concluding I want to remember my father, Anuar Kuri and thank him for having planted in me this love for Lebanon, and want through him also to pay tribute to my grandfather Domingo Kuri, who was one of the first emigrants who came to Mexico and who throughout his life was dedicated to receive and to attend all his countrymen working every day of his life for Lebanon and for the Lebanese community of Mexico.

My father taught me to love, respect and care for Lebanon. His teachings, always loving, motivated me and I drove to work by my Lebanese community from an early age and continue with the same energy to today.

He taught me, by example, the importance that the world Lebanese Cultural Union in the present and the future of Lebanon. **The taught me that the real strength of Lebanon is in its emigration.**

I want to thank the presence today of the Ms. Soad Pheres de Kuri, my mother who always accompanied and supported my father in this mission and that now is here supporting me along with my brother José Anuar.

My biggest love is going to my wife, Nancy and my princesses Nicole and Alejandra who are my reason for living and will surely be that most enjoy and suffer this adventure that begins today.

Thank you all for your love and for your support. Today begins a new stage of the Lebanese Cultural Union world, a stage that only will be possible with the disciplined and passionate work of all of us.

Viva Lebanon

Viva Argentina

Long live the World Lebanese Cultural Union