



Marhaba

Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan Monthly Newsletter – January & February 2021

*RCBC MEETS TUESDAYS AT THE HILTON DOWNTOWN HOTEL, DOWNTOWN, BEIRUT
BUSINESS MEETINGS AT 19:00*

Club Charter Date

June 21, 1995

Club Number

30893

District

2452 Rotary International

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2020 - 2021

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MARHABA EDITOR

PP Mona Jarudi
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“Letter from the Editor”

This year, on February 23, Rotary celebrated its 116th year of Service. It is also a year that witnessed severe challenges in the world at every level. The world was immersed in a viral cloud that cast its shadows on every aspect of life as we knew it and prompted the whole world to unite in action and reaction. Rotary as a service organization rose up to the challenges and brought about solutions to ease the ravages of the pandemic by creating novel opportunities for Rotarians to stay as People of Action. Paul Harris believed that “If Rotary is to realize its proper destiny, it must be evolutionary at all times, revolutionary on occasions”. This past year witnessed these words come alive where Rotary clubs evolved and revolutionized their way of thinking and problem solving.

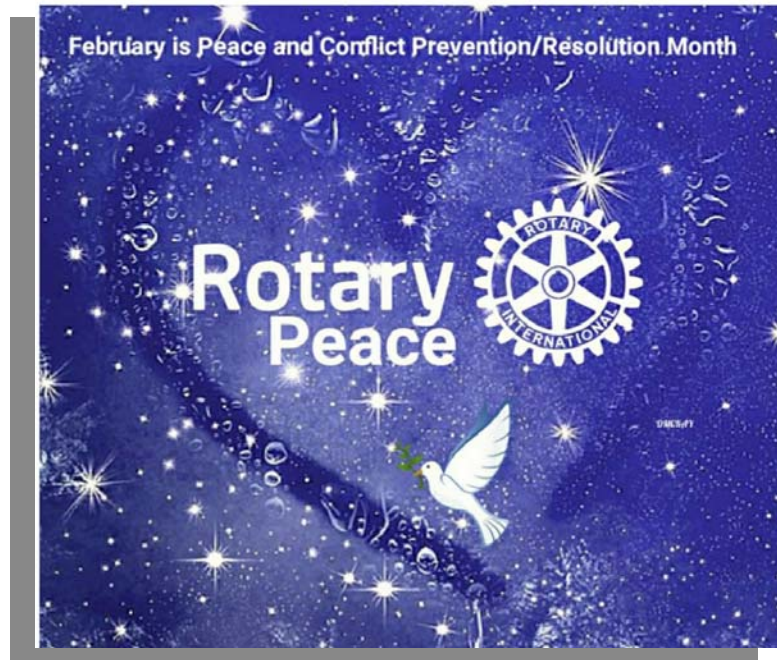
February is also the month of Peace and Conflict Prevention/Resolution. In his February message RI President Holger Knaack addressed the role of Rotary in promoting Peace and international understanding. He stated that there are many paths to Peace in Rotary, the youth programs highlight “the direction to Positive Peace, as does the work of inter country committees and the Rotary Action Groups for Peace”. Another path is the Rotarian Peace Projects Incubator, a collaboration between Rotarians, Rotaractors, and Rotary Peace Fellows and Alumni. This incubator designed 48 global projects that any club can support directly or through Rotary Foundation global grants. In line with this important area of focus, Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan has embarked on a Global Grant, NewGen Peace Builders, the first of its kind in the Middle East to help promote positive peace among the youth in Lebanon.

The paths to peace are numerous, what is needed is the will and desire to choose a path and follow it in our communities and countries.

On other project activities, the Karantina Public Hospital Global Grant was submitted to the TRF in Mid February 2021 with much appreciation to the

Rotary Clubs involved worldwide for their support and contributions to this initiative. A new HDF-Heartbeat Global Grant project to provide heart surgeries to six needy children was also approved by the RCBC Board. We look forward to receiving continuing positive news for these and other projects in the RCBC community service pipeline.

PP Mona Jarudi



RC Beirut Cosmopolitan & RC De Beyrouth
Joint Online Business Meeting With Dr Amer Bisat
Managing Director, Head of Sovereign & Emerging Markets
BlackRock/New York
“CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY : IMAGINING LEBANON 2.0”

January 12, 2021



For its first business meeting in 2021, RCBC hosted Dr. Amer Bisat as its guest speaker. Dr. Bisat has 30 years of academic, policy and financial market experience with a focus on emerging markets and sovereign crises. For the past seven years, Dr. Bisat is the Managing director and Head of Sovereign and Emerging Markets at Black Rock, the world’s largest Asset Management company. Prior to this post he had an illustrious career academically in Columbia University and as senior portfolio manager at Morgan Stanley and UBS.

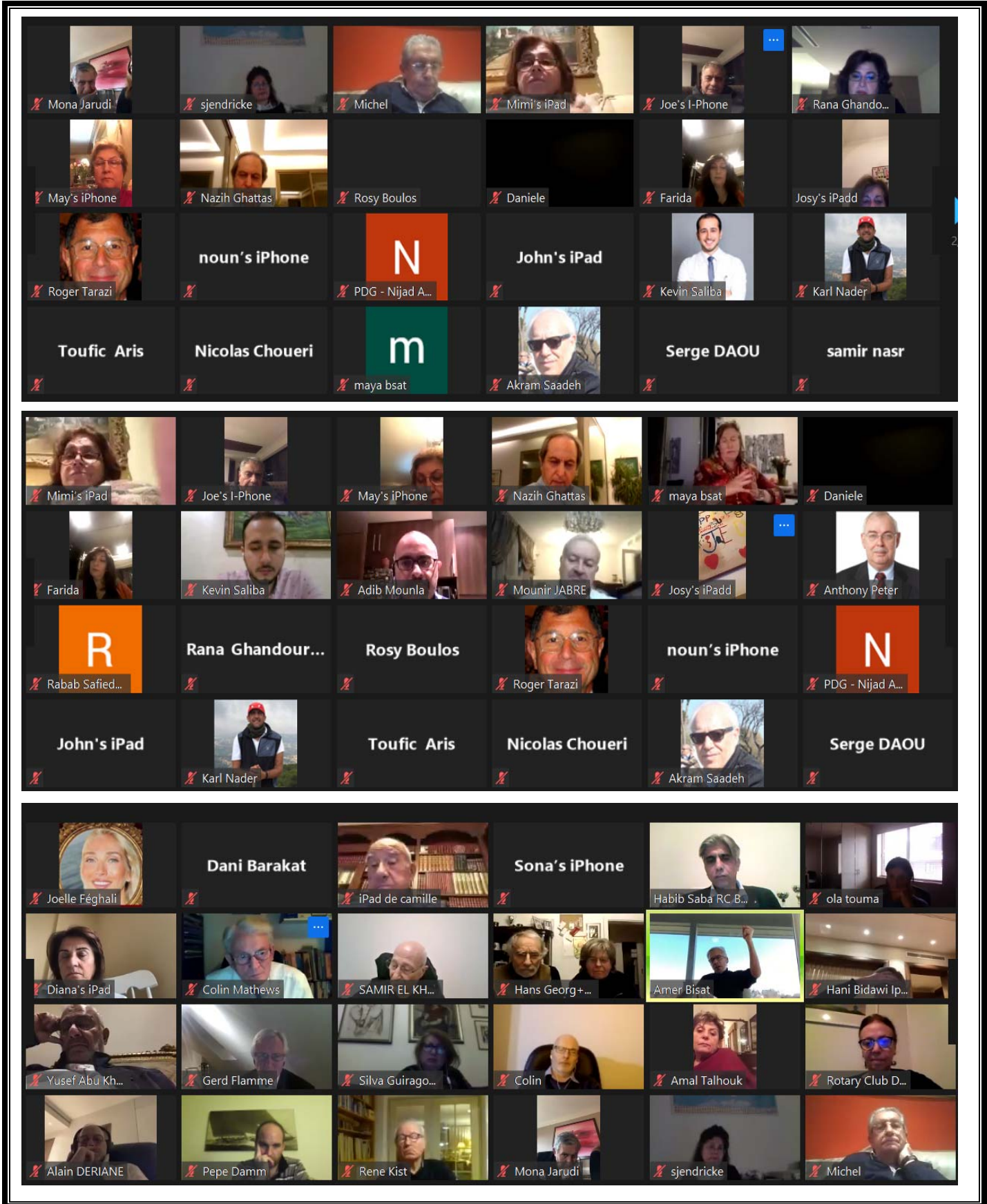
In a most interesting talk titled “Crisis as Opportunity - Imagining Lebanon 2.0”, Dr. Bisat delivered an impassioned and realistic image of Lebanon in its current predicament. He started by saying that it is perhaps naive to be talking about “Lebanon 2.0” when the country is in the midst of a depression the like of which we haven’t seen since “safar barlik”, but we must. The current path is existentially and fatally threatening. We have no option but to resist and demand a better tomorrow.

During the darkest moments of 2008, Barack Obama’s chief of staff famously quipped that “you never let a serious crisis go to waste”. Crises are opportunities to do things we could never imagine can be done. As we are addressing Lebanon, we need to acknowledge that the old economic model is dead. The post civil war economy was imbalanced and inefficient, relied on short term consumption and on imports rather than local production. The boom led to bust and eventually the abyss that we now find ourselves in.

Dr. Amer stated that the path forward is clear but not easy. This path has three stages:

1. Stabilization: an IMF arrangement is critically needed to inject US dollars to rapidly stem the implosion.
2. Restructuring: this involves public sector debt, addressing the bankrupt banking sector, disastrous public finances including EDL and BDL losses. This phase will take at least two years to be put in place but a road map is required immediately.
3. Recovery: Lebanon’s problem has always been that the ‘system’ never allowed the economy’s ‘comparative advantages’ to be fully exploited. The population is highly educated, the country is internationally well integrated, the private sector is very entrepreneurial and the ‘diaspora’ too good of an asset not to have Lebanon growing robustly and aggressively. Once the economy is stabilized and problems resolved, there will be a need for a set of ‘micro’ and sectoral policies that puts the country on a multi-decade path of recovery and prosperity.

Economic revival necessitates political renewal. In the exact words of Dr. Bisat, “Thinking through the complicated interaction of the two (economics and politics) is critical to any imagination” exercise.



Online Business Meeting With Ms Lamia Charlebois
Public Relations Consultant, Speaker, Author & Reporter

“EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION:

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN”

January 19, 2021



Ms. Lamia Charlebois has more than 25 years experience in communication. After having worked in large corporations and agencies, she launched her own PR company in 2003. Her expertise includes strategic counsel, crisis management and media relations with clients located in Canada, USA, Europe and the Middle East. Having left Lebanon for Canada more than 30 years ago, she mastered the unsettling art of holding a dual citizenship, has experienced all the ups and downs and hardships and managed to build a successful career and life in Canada. She represents the Cedar old Lebanon wherever she goes, fights to preserve the reputation and rights of fellow Lebanese while helping navigate through the systems.

In a very interesting talk, Lamia started by saying that much like a Clint Eastwood in the 1966 movie, emigrating takes some skills and once a person lands in the adoptive country, life can feel like a Western movie! No brochure, website or immigration lawyer will show the various emigration and immigration facets that one needs to think about before packing. What is it like to build a brand new professional, social and so very different life? Is one fit for this challenge? And why would one leave their country in the first place?

Lamia was very honest about painting the right picture about emigration and immigration. There are harsh realities that a person has to face leaving the familiar behind and having the courage to face hardships in the new locale. Desperate times often call for desperate measures but a step back is required to know that escapism is not always the best possible long term solution...there are hardships in every locality and it's up to every individual to assess their ability to cope or not!



Online Business Meeting With Mr Ramzi Raad
Group Chairman of TBWA/RAAD Middle East

“ADVERTISING IN LEBANON & THE REGION

UNDER THE CURRENT HEALTH, POLITICAL & ECONOMIC CHALLENGES”

February 02, 2021



On the evening of the 2nd of February, Ramzi Raad the Chairman of TBWA\RAAD Communication Group addressed the zoom business meeting of The Rotary Club Beirut Cosmopolitan, with a presentation entitled "THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC, THE PORT EXPLOSION AND THE FINANCIAL COLLAPSE ON THE ADVERTISING BUSINESS IN LEBANON & THE REGION.

The speaker said: "2020 has been the most extraordinary year in modern history which forced us to change the way we think, behave, connect, work and play. No one person on the planet has not been touched by COVID, either directly or via someone close, and in Lebanon this global devastating nightmare kept getting multiplied; first when the 17 October revolution (thawra) opened the flood gate and young people went on down on the streets all over the country. Then, with the explosion of Beirut Port and the destruction of the capital, and now with the cabinet formation saga.

The Global Advertising industry has been badly affected with the decline of \$63 billion between 2019 and 2020; and in our MENA region the decline was 2.9 billion U.S. Dollars This was accompanied by steep job losses amongst the younger generation specially those working in face-to-face business sectors. Consumer behavior changed when leisure, travel and entertainment industries almost came to a stand-still, so people had to rely on alternatives.

All these problems accelerated some shifts, starting with the shift to a digital world, although this was well underway before the 2020 lock-down, but more people went on-line much faster than before. Online brand visibility became more important than ever, as on-line ads became the new shopfront.

On-line transactions and e-commerce are now mainstream, having been enhanced by the lockdown and the banking crisis which led more people to get confined to on-line shopping not only for ready meals, groceries, and medicine, but also for various learning courses and subscriptions.

In the current sales-oriented economy, brand and vendors are looking to recoup their 2020 losses, so this year will surely witness a big focus on performance driven communications that drive leads and result in conversions. Covid 19 and the deteriorating situation in Lebanon have turned everyday life on its head. That is why if we are really seeking change, business must act with integrity and empathy. This being the only route to navigate through the current challenges and retain their customers when the crisis ends.

The advertising market in Lebanon has shrunk by 58% between 2019 and 2020. Faced with an unprecedented economic crisis brands have been forced to cut costs, re-evaluate their communication and focus on survival. TV advertising which had reached the level of \$1,498 Millions in 2018, dropped sharply to \$48,3 Millions in 2020. While Outdoor Advertising that had peaked to \$1,820; dropped to \$55,4 in the same years. But Lebanon is resilient, as advertisers and media contractors who saw street billboards stripped from their usual messages and looking naked, dirty and rusty. Quickly jumped on the opportunity and plastered these with public service ads paid for by banks and other national entities.

Raad concluded by saying "there is light at the end of the tunnel and advertising spend is expected to recover in 2021, albeit from a low base in 2020". Most international media groups have agreed to a modest prediction for growth in the world advertising market- after the global vaccination drive, that is currently underway - In October 2020 the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had revised up its forecast for the Middle East & North Africa by 1.2percentage points, to an overall contraction of 3.8 per cent. It projects 3.1% in 2021 and 4.2% in 2022. Across the region, we should see the first year of advertising growth since 2014 and an anticipated 10% rise. Lebanese media has suffered but it will definitely rebound, once everything goes back to normal. It was paused and not terminated. The shift towards digital will contribute to the anticipated growth in Lebanon. As e-commerce is growing worldwide, the Middle East e-commerce market is also booming, and Lebanon is emerging as the new hub for that.

Lebanon has always been the pioneer of advertising and creativity in the Pan Arab world. Lebanese advertising revenue has grown by \$1,025,060,892 between January and August 2020 Media is granting so much support for those who are currently advertising, as by doing so they are supporting the media in these rough times. Thinking about this usually criticised practise rationally, we need to convince ourselves that it is perfectly justified when noting that TV viewership - in the country - has shown %21 increase as people are confined to their living rooms during periods of lockdown.

Raad concluded by citing an example from his own agency TBWA\RAAD who resorted to lighting its Saifi building during the lockdown - when the streets were pitch dark - by the colours of the Lebanese flag; and then running a magazine campaign saying, IT IS NEVER DARK IN BEIRUT.

Before the lively Q&A session, the speaker left us with the following conclusion:

“ان التاجر الذي يوقف حملاته الاعلانية املاً بتوفير المال، هو أشبه بالانسان الذي يوقف الساعة املاً بتوفير الوقت”

“A MERCHANT WHO STOPS ADVERTISING TO SAVE MONEY IS LIKE A PERSON WHO STOPS THE CLOCK TO SAVE TIME.”



Online Business Meeting With Dr. Nadia Kanj

MD FCCP

“COVID VACCINE: FACTS, CONFUSIONS AND ILLUSIONS”

February 16, 2021



Dr. Nadim Kanj is currently an Assistant Professor, Pulmonary and Critical Care, at the American University of Beirut Medical Center since 1986. He is involved in clinical work, teaching and research. He has chaired, moderated and lectured in several national, regional and international conferences. He is an ex-President of the Lebanese Pulmonary Society. Currently the director of the smoking cessation program at AUBMC.

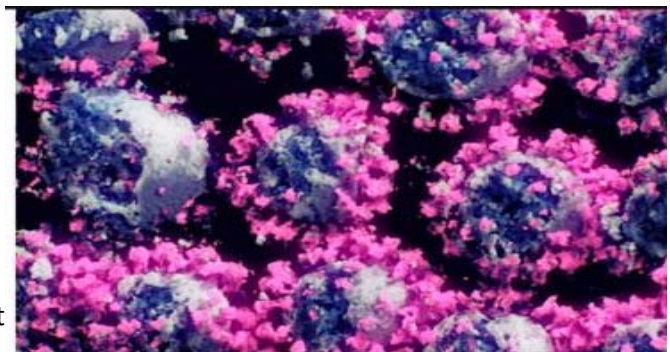
In a detailed and highly scientific presentation, Dr. Kanj walked us through Covid 19, its origins, diagnosis and related important facts. He discussed the genetic variants of the virus and how different companies are dealing with that vis-à-vis the vaccines developed already. The mutations raise “the possibility that the vaccines would be less effective, not that they won’t work at all”. He discussed all the theories surrounding the vaccines, their delivery methods and the hesitancy of people to take the vaccine. He stated that the ideal preferred vaccine will provide over 70% protection, has long term and short term safety for different population groups, will be a single dose with a long term immunity more than one year, has thermostability to facilitate storage and finally to be affordable and easy to administer and disseminate.

On February 13, 2021 Lebanon received its first shipment of Covid19 vaccine. It has so far reserved around 6.3 million vaccine doses which are enough to inoculate around half of the population; 2.1 million jabs of Pfizer BioNTech vaccine, 2.7 million through the coax platform (AstraZeneca, Novavax and Pfizer), and 1.5 million doses from Oxford AstraZeneca through a separate agreement.

What don’t we know about the vaccines?

- Unclear if the vaccine makes one less contagious to others.
- Unclear whether the vaccine is effective and safe for children under 16.
- How long the vaccine’s protection last and whether an annual dose is required.
- Safety and effectiveness in pregnant and breast feeding women.

Dr. Kanj stated that there will be a time in the future when Covid 19 will not be a daily topic. There is a light at the end of this dark tunnel because VACCINATION in the absence of viral escape is the way out of this. The goal of eliminating community transmission of the pandemic virus is achievable and sustainable. The conditions favoring successful elimination include informed input from scientists, political commitment, sufficient public health infrastructure, public engagement and trust, and a safety net to support vulnerable populations



3D IMAGE

Online Business Meeting With Dr Fadi El Jardali
M.PH, PhD. Professor of Health Policy and Systems
“THE EFFECTS OF LEGALIZING CANNABIS IN LEBANON”

February 23, 2021



Dr. Jardali, Founder and Director of Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center, gave a very interesting talk on a very current and controversial topic which is legalizing cannabis in Lebanon, a substance that so far has been under the radar for a long time. Since it is being grown, its use for medicinal purposes is gaining traction but the road to this is not well paved yet. K2P supported the Lebanese parliament with the draft law on legalization of cannabis through Rapid Response. Many countries have legalized cannabis for medicinal use due to its effectiveness in reducing neuropathic pain, spasticity in multiple sclerosis patients and nausea and vomiting after chemotherapy. When used for recreational purposes, the negative risks to the body outweigh the imagined positives.

The laws and policies governing cannabis use are not well studied. It is still not very certain how legalization can affect behavior, consumption, economies and other outcomes in the short or long term, and the expected positives and shortcomings of every policy will need to be cautiously balanced. In Lebanon, there are critical concerns regarding the effective implementation and enforcement of the law, and the capacity of the Lebanese government to regulate and enforce the laws comes into question where poor regulation can result in deleterious health and social consequences.









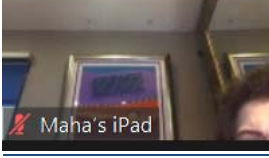











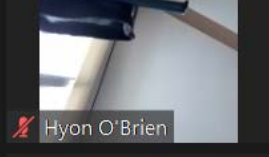
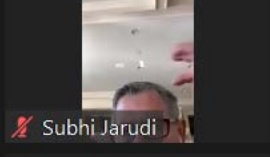







Prior to cannabis legalization, an assessment of the current situation is warranted through evaluation of:

- Cannabis use and abuse
- Cannabis related criminality rate
- Number and type of medical conditions requiring cannabis treatment
- Size of the market
- How will the cannabis policy affect major stakeholders and impact projection of any policy regarding cannabis regulation.

Dr. Jardali added that any cannabis framework for legalization should encompass the following dimensions:

- Regulation and enforcement of the law
- Nature, quality and potency of product
- Price regulation and taxation
- Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to mitigate unintended adverse effects
- Education of the community and information sharing regarding the goal of legalization
- Raising awareness, mainly among the youth, on the deleterious effects of cannabis use.

A very interesting talk, the topic of which will be closely followed to see how serious will the process will be in Lebanon in legalizing this substance for medicinal purposes.

 Adella Bassoul	Dani Barakat	 Fadi El-Jardali	 SAMIR EL KH...	 Silva Guirago...
 Ken's iPad	 Anita Rayner	 Colin Mathews	 Hans-Peter So...	Colin Gibson
 Maha's iPad	 mohammed	 Gerd Flamme	 Nazih Ghattas	 David Tranter
 Don MacKenzie	 kamal Kallab	 Iman A	 Joe's I-Phone	 PP Mohammed...
 Mounir JABRE	 Farida Najjar ...	 Hyon O'Brien	 Subhi Jarudi	 Mona Jarudi
Diana's iPad	 Habib Saba R...	Wadad Khoueis...	Imane Jaffal	Amer Sabbouri
John's iPad	 Samar Jabbour	 P Farid El Dah...	Jean-Paul	 Bana Kalash
Maher	Zoom user	Diana Jamal	Zeinab Tarhini	 Maha Maalou...
NH	RC TYRE EUROPA	 CHRISTINE A...	Amal Talhouk	Nada Sawan



Marhaba



Many Happy Birthday Returns

January

Colin Gibson
Farida Najjar
Habib Saba
Mona Jarudi
Nada Maalouf
Rony Eid

THE END