Rector's Address – Conference "Engineering the Future with AI"
June 19, 2025 – 150th Anniversary of USJ
Under the High Patronage of His Excellency Prime Minister Nawaf Salam

Your Excellency Prime Minister Nawaf Salam,
Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests,

It is a great honor and joy to welcome you to Saint Joseph University of Beirut, in this year when we celebrate 150 years of commitment to knowledge, to humanity, and to Lebanon. Your presence today at this major conference, titled **"Engineering the Future with AI,"** reflects our shared determination to look to the future with clarity, courage, and imagination.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to His Excellency Prime Minister Nawaf Salam for his generous support and for granting this event his high patronage. I also warmly thank all our partners, speakers, researchers, and students.

I cannot but express special gratitude to **the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Mr. Wassim Raphaël**, and to **the Director of the INCI, Mr. Marc Ibrahim**, along with their teams, for the great efforts they have invested in making this beautiful event a reality.

Artificial intelligence is deeply transforming the world of work, healthcare, finance, education… and of course, the world of engineering.

Allow me to share a particular reflection:
The future of the engineer will not be solely technological. It will be fundamentally human.

The engineer of tomorrow will not only be a specialist in algorithms, coding, or calculations. They must also be a sense-giver, a responsible builder, a mediator between the power of machines and the fragility of the world.

In the face of growing automation, systematic optimization, and the temptation to hand everything over to AI, the engineer will be called upon more than ever to make ethical decisions, to design systems that respect the environment, social justice, and human dignity.

Because to design is not merely to produce: it is also to anticipate, to preserve, and to think long-term.

At USJ, we aim to train engineers who are not only capable of mastering AI, but who can also engage in dialogue across disciplines, and understand the ethical, legal, and philosophical stakes of their actions—**engineers who are responsible and open-minded, in service of inclusive progress**.

Through this conference, our mission is therefore twofold:
– To explore the immense potential of artificial intelligence,
– And to reaffirm the central role of the human being in every societal project.

As we celebrate the 150th anniversary of USJ, we honor our past—but above all, we commit our living energies to a future that we want to be enlightened, sustainable, and united.

I wish you a rich and inspiring conference, forward-looking and guided by the values that have always brought pride to our university.

Thank you.