



PRESS RELEASE

A Presentation on 'A Three-Level-Model of Societal Change' at MAS's Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture 2014

On 26 November MAS held the sixth annual Yusif A. Sayigh Development Lecture as part of a lecture series which MAS instituted in honor of the late Prof. Yusif A. Sayigh (1916-2004). A number of academics, official figures, and representatives of the private and civil sectors and foreign organizations attended the lecture which was given by Prof. Matthias Weiter, a Professor of Development Studies at Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany and a consultant for the German Government.



Dr. Nabeel Kassis, MAS's Director General, commenced the lecture by deliberating over Prof. Yusif A. Sayigh achievements as the foremost Palestinian development economists of the twentieth century, a leading Palestinian figure who worked to promote Palestinian and Arab development and economic integration, and a patriot who devoted his entire life to serve critical Palestinian issues. His professional and national accomplishments culminated in leading the team that drafted the Palestinian Development Program (PDP) published in 1993 for the reconstruction and the development of the Palestinian economy in 1994-2000. Prof. Sayigh was a member of the Executive Committee of the PLO for many years as well as a member of the first Board of Trustees of MAS.

At the end of his speech, Dr. Kassis expressed his gratitude to the sponsors of this year lecture including PADICO Holding and –Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) for their support and introduced the lecturer.



Prof. Weiter started his lecture by introducing the concept of the three levels in a society which are engaged in societal changes. These three levels, as defined by Talcott Parsons (1954) include the technical (or micro-) level, the organizational (or mezo-) level, and the institutional (or macro-) level. Prof. Weiter gave examples of solid waste disposal and the change in traffic rules in Sweden. The first part of the lecture ended with the conclusion that "The success of a developing society depends on the efficiency of the vertical communication between the three levels".

Then Prof. Weiter continued with an example of the model's practical application in the German-Arab-Master Program (GAMP) in five sectors: water management, renewable energy, economic reform, education management, and town planning. GAMP was instituted in response to the increasing demand for managers of development projects in the Arab region.

At the end, Prof. Weiter concluded his lecture by highlighting the advantages of the model, which can be summed up as the model's ability to reduce the complex reality in addition to the possibility to enhance the speed and quality of adaptation in a changing world.