

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**

**The Intellectual Contribution of Pr Kamel Baddari,
Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research,
on the Topic of:
"A Creative University in the Service of a Rising Algeria"
on the Occasion of the Official Opening of the Academic
Year 2023-2024**

University of Guelma "8 May 1945" on the date: September 23, 2023

On the occasion of the opening of the academic year 2023-2024, I am pleased to share with you a vision that aims to enhance the identity of our university. It is known from all that we are a community of motivated students and employees who are united by our dual commitment to the excellence and to proving the efficiency of our university. In addition, we are determined to strengthen its strategic position not only at the regional level but also on the international arena.

To achieve what we aspire to, we started from the fundamental assumption that if we want our efforts in the fields of education, training, and research to bear high-quality fruits, it is essential to clearly adopt a new model. And this is exactly what we have done, and we continue in this endeavor by establishing more suitable standards and procedures in the fields of education, governance, student life, and scientific research.

But we must, above all, ask the following question: "What is the essence of the university?" Or in other words, "What is its core?" To answer this question, it must first be clarified that the term "university" goes back to Plato's Academy, which embodied the idea that the university is a community of teachers and scholars who come together for learning and study. Later on, and precisely in the 13th century, the university became a sacred place for study, learning, discussion, teaching, discovery and contemplation, where the scholar must be rooted in deep ethics and establish his own law through continuous and rigorous search for knowledge.

It had been designed that the modern concept of the university was largely shaped by "Wilhelm von Humboldt", the founder of the University of Berlin in 1810. The Humboldtian university primarily emphasized the cultural aspect by shaping an educated and open-minded individual as a citizen in a nation-state, making the university at that time the central cultural institution of any society. Inspired by this model, universities were established worldwide.

What is expected of the university today is to be able to face several challenges, as it is required to ensure high-quality training for human capital in the context of the significant increase in student numbers, providing opportunities for all social groups, including the most vulnerable ones, to join the university, and providing professional integration opportunities for its graduates as a solution to youth unemployment and to fulfill family aspirations. Furthermore, the university is expected to be a center of theoretical and practical expertise, a pioneer in the field of human knowledge, a defender of intellectual property rights, and a producer of soft power.

At the global level, the university is witnessing unprecedented changes at the structural and conceptual levels. The factors that have contributed to this situation have been identified more than once. These factors are primarily globalization and inclusivity. The impacts of these trends and tendencies have become well known, and they have generated an increasing number of challenges that must be faced quickly and flexibly.

We have strived to embody this by positioning the Algerian university, amidst all these challenges, to achieve progress while preserving its core missions as a source of knowledge, a catalyst for economic development, and a promoter of societal prosperity. Our goal now consists of enhancing these gains through giving increasing attention to creativity.

Let us take a moment to define this core concept from the perspective of contemporary education. Creativity is "an imaginative activity that leads to authentic and valuable results" and it necessitates "preventing formal structures from inhibiting the ability to imagine, whether amongst students or teachers." This activity results from two distinct stages: creativity itself and the embodiment of the resulting product. Therefore, creativity is the starting point for innovation; where there is no creativity, there can be no innovation.

In the same context, the university must, above all, be creative and prepare the conditions leading to developing and promoting creativity within the boundaries of its core mission and fields of activity. However, creativity cannot be imposed or commanded, nor can it be counterfeited or simulated. It can be stimulated and nurtured. This is the meaning that we aspire to integrate into the university we seek to establish, making it a "creative institution that contributes to the enrichment and liberation of society, using an approach specifically designed to develop creative thinking and behavior in students, employing suitable teaching tools and methods, and adopting an innovative approach that makes education more attractive."

The daily activities of the university primarily include education, scientific research, and management. However, due to the increasing influence of globalization and inclusivity, these activities are increasingly shaped by practices inspired by other areas of human activity, such as business management, where the student is considered a customer in some educational systems. The intention here is to adopt these new practices without negatively affecting, in any way whatsoever, the essence of the university, particularly in relation to:

- Education, where the dynamic triadic process between the professor, knowledge, and the student should not be surpassed, with the student remaining in a learning position. The professor should have the competence to determine what the student needs to comprehend, while encouraging the student, at the same time, to acquire independence to complete his educational path according to his personal project. The student, in terms of not allowing his independence and enhancement to affect his ability to collaborate within the group, and competition between universities should not affect their ability to engage in mutual cooperation.
- Scientific research, in the sense that it is necessary to recognize that scientific activity has a cultural and creative nature, whether scientific or pedagogical, aims to develop the economy and enrich society. Scientific publishing is only a result and means to achieve this goal.
- University management, in the sense that it is necessary to reinforce the fundamental and self-evident principle of ensuring suitable conditions for the embodiment of academic work with precision and professionalism. These academic practices are likely to confirm the status of the university and enhance its role in fulfilling its tasks.
- Innovation, as the desire to direct human effort towards new directions in order to design new products or improve existing ones, is considered as a main task of the university institutions, which educate and train students to adapt and evolve in a constantly changing world. Many of the jobs that university graduates will be practiced by 2030 have not yet emerged, and yet, the university we aspire to build

today seeks to focus on creativity and innovation by putting in place mechanisms, some of which are being implemented and others are about to be, which will facilitate the student's adaptation to new situations. Among these mechanisms, for example, are: entrepreneurship, incubators, five-star students, open universities, distance learning, continuous training...

On the other hand, providing a set of knowledge to all learners without marginalization or exclusion is one of our most important duties, so it is imperative for us to continuously assess our strengths in order to focus our efforts on areas of our expertise, and enhance our abilities regarding enriching the knowledge economy and innovation.

For this reason, we must continuously work to consolidate our identity and enhance the reputation of our university through:

- Valuable and qualitative contribution as engineers, social scientists, writers and thinkers, artists, athletes, professors and researchers... in service of the Algerian society.
- Building Strong Partnerships with similar institutions. Currently, efforts are being made to enhance collaborations with various academic and scientific institutions in countries like Russia, Turkey, China, and others..., while also maintaining traditional partnerships on regional and international levels.

We also strive to contribute to the advancement of the innovation economy, as we have initiated the establishment of " Excellence Poles" in the national map of education and research. In this context, the creation of the scientific and technological Pole in "Sidi Abdellah", in the capital Algiers, which currently includes four specialized schools in promising scientific fields, is part of our efforts. It should be noted that this pole is still under development, as it is expected to include other universities and research institutions that together will constitute a unified academic structure under the name of "University of Algiers for Science and Technology." This pole will primarily focus its activities on research by incorporating its various components into the research and development circle, enabling it to obtain distinguished ranks within the most prominent and best international classifications.

In this regard, allow me to express my gratitude to the directors of the schools affiliated with this promising future pole, for the rapid pace they adopted in introducing this new and distinguished scientific institution into service. I also point out, in the same context, that the two regional directorates of the universities of the East and West of the country, which encompass higher education institutions in our vast South, are proposing suitable locations for the establishment of two new scientific and technological poles, similar to the Algiers pole.

The National Sessions of higher education, expected to be held within December, will allow the preparation of the academic year 2024-2025 from a renewed reform perspective, particularly in terms of reviewing fields of education and their related disciplines. This process is necessary to improve the visibility of national university institutions and enhance their role in contributing to economic development, optimizing resource utilization and

sharing, as well as reducing the phenomena of dropout and failure, and creating a promising dynamic within the university campus.

It is significant to note that the sector of high education has decided to continue using the « open source software », which are considered as liable allowing their users to bring ameliorations, adding to that the fact that distinguishes them as open and free spaces for learning and sharing knowledge, encouraging, by that, innovative ideas.

In the current stage, we are working on raising our capabilities through the development of innovative products such as:

- Electric vehicles and drones,
- Radar devices for forest fire prevention,
- Batteries for renewable energy,
- Drought-resistant wheat cultivation,
- Desalination of seawater, etc.

We are also in the process of expanding the scope of education at the Sidi Abdellah university Pole and its higher schools in advanced fields such as mobile robotics, artificial intelligence, nanotechnology...We also seek to benefit from our accumulated expertise in related fields to design training programs focusing on natural resource management (desalination of sea water, agriculture, pastoral farming), and resistance and sustainability of water wells in the south of the country...

In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to invite the Director of the University of "8 May 1945" in Guelma to develop a comprehensive vision regarding the provision of advanced training programs focusing on future professions and contributing to the local, regional, and national economic development.

Today, more than ever, the Algerian university is required to strengthen its ability to win bets and face challenges, especially in light of the growing social demand for higher education. It is also required to promote mobility for professors and students by increasing initiatives in this regard with foreign counterparts through coordinating bilateral and multilateral efforts, through adopting renewed mechanisms for organizing internships, training and residential training and joint supervision of theses, and scientific leave, encouraging the joining of Algerian higher education institutions to active and effective global university networks, as well as mutual recognition of academic qualifications with foreign universities, as well as establishing new relationships with research centers and laboratories, while strengthening existing ones, and promoting joint scientific publication, without overlooking in the pursuit of enhancing the quality of higher education.

These factors have long been ingrained in the identity of the Algerian university, representing its commitment. We must continue to strengthen these approaches with our traditional partners in developed industrialized countries as well as our partners in emerging countries.

I do not want to conclude this inaugural lecture without renewing my call to Algerian competencies working abroad to be as close as possible to their colleagues in the homeland, in order to exchange knowledge and collaborate towards the realization of our noble goals.

Today, we cannot avoid uncertainty and risks, nor can we ignore the possible difficulties or obstacles that may hinder the fulfillment of our ambitions and projects aimed at making the Algerian university a creative university serving the rising Algeria, and it will be timely to invite our professors, researchers, and students to participate and engage more in this endeavor.

I am confident that our unity will enable us to choose the best path for renewal, a path capable of meeting our country's aspirations in science and technology.

Finally, I can only wish all actors of the university family a fruitful return and a successful academic year. From the University of "8 May 1945" in Guelma, I declare the official start of the academic year 2023/2024.

Thank you for your kind listening