

Allocution de la ministre déléguée chargée des Français de l'étranger, Mme Hélène Conway-Mouret, à l'occasion de l'inauguration du lycée d'Amman (Amman, 26/09/2013)

(en anglais et français)

Minister,

Ambassador,

Senators,

Directors, Principal,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am very happy that my first visit to Jordan as a Minister for the French abroad should enable me to officially open this impressive new Lycée.

It is a symbol of the strong relationship between our countries. And our government wants this link to grow stronger.

«Teaching is an act of friendship». These words were written by the French historian Michelet in the 19th century. They take on a special meaning today, Minister. The act of teaching which brings us together here today is also a sign of the unwavering friendship between our two countries.

I want to tell you how proud I am to stand before you here today. For many years, I was a teacher. I taught at university. I am a linguist. The word culture can mean many things to many people. To me, culture enables us to understand the world and it enables us to love. This very special school is the embodiment of that ability to love.

This long-awaited inauguration demonstrates the success of French teaching in Jordan. And I believe that it is also a reflection of France's influence throughout the world.

French expats - parents - help build the first French school in Amman in 1972. Forty one years ago already. It was initially located in Djebel Amman, then it moved to Shmeisani, and moved again in 1990 to its current site, in Deir Ghbar. At the time, the school had 150 students. The numbers increased steadily, in particular in the secondary school - College, and Lycée - Today, there are 517 students. The walls of the Deir Ghbar school had become too narrow. Moving was a necessity. And when I finally saw this building with my own eyes earlier, I was glad it happened.

Minister, Ambassador, Le Corbusier used to say that architecture was a frame of mind, not a profession. It was our duty to ask a joint team of Jordanian and French architects to fulfil the task of creating this Lycée, because of the symbolic nature of the building.

And when I see the result, I know we were right to do so: the beauty and quality of their work is testament to our friendship. I would like to thank the architects for their creativity -- AW2 on the French side, DARB on the Jordanian side. I also want to thank the craft workers of Al Wagi for their art, the whole structure is perfectly integrated in Amman's urban landscape.

The Ajloun stone used here reflects the light in a splendid manner. Their clever use of the contours of the site promotes fluid movements of light, and the East West orientation of the building provides natural light and reduces the amount of energy wasted. This masterpiece is truly modern, and in keeping with the needs and concerns of the 21st century.

I was particularly attentive to the way space was used in the building. I was given a guided tour just before we met.

I am very impressed with the layout of the interior of the building. It is perfectly suited to today's teaching requirements. Beauty, comfort and space are decisive factors for the students' well-being and success. It also takes into consideration the working conditions of the teachers, administrative and technical staff, which are all too often overlooked.

With such qualities, this building adds to the excellence of our teaching network across the world. This network already has a great reputation. Growing enrolment in the Middle East is proof of that.

French education abroad is the bedrock of our diplomacy. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Laurent Fabius, and myself are very focused on this point.

Many members of the French community in Jordan are here with us today. They chose to live in Jordan for different reasons. But despite their different paths, together and individually, they represent an opportunity and an asset for our country.

Through them, we bind economic, cultural and political links with Jordan. Both our countries benefit from these links. French companies play a key role as foreign investors in the kingdom. It is our ability to mutually benefit from global dynamics, relying on the mobility of our people with their talent, while maintaining our core values.

This is why the quality and continued success of our teaching network abroad is a priority for my government.

When an engineer, a craftsman, or a business leader educated within the French education system is at work anywhere in the world, France wields influence.

Wherever French people decide to live and work, France draws new borders.

Please allow me Minister to switch to French now.

Je me rendrai demain au camp de Zaatari, pour rencontrer les militaires, le personnel médical et soignant ainsi que les humanitaires français. Je leur dirai le soutien et l'admiration de la France pour le travail difficile mais vital qu'ils accomplissent auprès des réfugiés syriens. Je serai à l'écoute de leurs besoins, que je ne manquerai pas de relayer auprès du Président de la République, du Premier Ministre et du ministre des Affaires étrangères.

Face à tant de détresse et de douleur, l'inauguration d'un établissement scolaire pourrait sembler dérisoire. C'est pourtant l'un des remparts les plus sûrs et les plus nobles qu'on puisse dresser contre l'horreur de la guerre. Qu'ils soient Jordaniens, Français ou originaires d'autres pays, les élèves apprendront ici l'ouverture, la tolérance et la foi en l'avenir. Quel plus beau cadeau peut-on faire à des enfants et à des adolescents ?

Ce cadeau est le fruit d'une ambition partagée. Je voudrais donc, en guise de conclusion, saluer une nouvelle fois ceux qui l'ont rendu possible.

L'Agence pour l'enseignement français à l'étranger tout d'abord, dirigée par madame Hélène Farnaud-Defromont, qui a pris en charge l'achat du terrain et la construction du nouveau Lycée.

L'équipe pédagogique de l'Agence a pour sa part veillé à ce que l'établissement offre des parcours bilingues en anglais ou en arabe. Ces axes pédagogiques garantiront la qualité de l'établissement.

Mes remerciements vont ensuite au personnel enseignant et administratif. Sous la supervision de madame Sylvette Bouché, proviseure, et de madame Catherine Petit, directrice de l'Ecole primaire, ils ont rendu cette installation possible. Le soutien de l'Association des parents d'élèves a contribué à cette fluidité: qu'elle en soit remerciée.

Je veux enfin saluer le travail de la nouvelle équipe de l'ambassade sous la conduite de Madame l'ambassadrice Caroline Dumas et de Philippe Lane, conseiller culturel et de coopération.

Grâce à vos efforts conjugués, le lycée d'Amman s'intégrera au mieux dans son environnement jordanien. Il a d'ailleurs vocation à travailler avec les autres établissements français de Jordanie, qu'il s'agisse de l'Institut français de Jordanie ou de notre Institut de recherche sur le Proche Orient. De telles coopérations sont une force pour nos deux pays.

Je vous remercie./.