

**Ambassadorial Remarks for Launching of Maghreb Virtual
Library Project**

January 23, 2011

Good Morning. (Nodding toward each person as you acknowledge them) Minister Harroubia, Director General – Aourag, and representatives of the Civilian Research and Development Foundation. I am honored to be here and even more honored to celebrate with you in launching the Virtual Library. More than a year ago in his Cairo speech, President Obama announced plans to renew America's relationship with the Arab world through key areas related to education, science, technology, and health. The launch of the Virtual Library marks the realization of one aspect of this plan.

On December 3, I spoke in this very room to the Algerian-American Foundation for Culture, Education, Science, and Technology about the strides that the Embassy is making in science and technology and how we could work together to strengthen education and support the government of Algeria in ensuring the competitiveness of Algerians on a global scale. We thought that this project would not be ready until early spring; however, with the tenacity and dedication Dr. Hafid Aourag of the National Administration for Scientific Research and the team at CRDF, this program is now being launched ahead of schedule. This is clear proof of our shared commitment to advancing access to scientific research and improving mutual understanding between our countries and the countries of the region. I applaud the government of Algeria for its collaboration with CRDF.

The Virtual Library Project will link researchers from all over the world to research that is occurring in Algeria and will give Algerian researchers a wider audience and greater opportunities to conduct joint research. It will also give Algerian researchers and academics access to research world wide.

The “new beginning” that President Obama called for in his Cairo speech was not simply a checklist of initiatives mentioned in the speech; it reflected President Obama’s and Secretary of State Clinton’s commitment to a new way of engaging with Muslim communities around the world. I am happy to report that Algeria is reaping the benefits of our new commitment. Science and technology are key areas of

focus, and we will be demonstrating more programs and areas of cooperation in the field.

For example, there are plans in the spring for an American astronaut to visit Algeria for a few days to promote science and technology education; there are also plans to revive a program to map the Bay of Algiers. Another very exciting initiative is called TechWomen. It will pair women in Silicon Valley with their counterparts in the Middle East and North Africa for a professional mentorship and exchange program at leading technology companies in the United States beginning in the summer of 2011. Using innovative technologies, cutting-edge content, and social networking tools, TechWomen will foster and develop the next generation of women leaders in the technology field by providing women and girls with the access and opportunity

needed to pursue tech-based careers. This will include at least 10 Algerian women.

Also, the Embassy is accepting applications for the MIDDLE EAST SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY Visiting Fulbright Scholar Program which sends a scholar to the United States for three months.

With all of our programs and projects, we are laying the foundation for a broader and longer-lasting effort to promote science and technology. I thank you for allowing us to not only share in the launching of this project, but also in allowing us to continue to create more opportunities where we can share and celebrate our successes.