

FRENCH AMBASSADOR DR. MARC BARÉTY VISITS IBA KARACHI

A session with the French Ambassador Dr. Marc Baréty and his team was held at the IBA main campus. The primary objective of the session was to bridge the gap between the two countries and to establish collaborative relations between the French and Pakistani educational institutions. Various avenues of attaining higher education in France, along with scholarships opportunities were discussed in detail.

The French embassy team consisted of Higher Education Attaché Mr. Sebastien Cartier and Consul General Mr. Didier Talpain. From the IBA attendees included, Associate Dean Dr. Huma Baqai, Chairperson Social Sciences and Liberal Arts Dr. Faiza Mushtaq, heads of centres, faculty members and students.

The session commenced with Dr. Baréty presenting the audience with a brief history of France and its political, social and economic dynamics that make France one of the biggest economic zones in the world. Dr. Baréty communicated that the current top priorities in maintaining diplomatic relations with Pakistan comprised of focusing on higher education and green sustainable development. He also mentioned that Prime Minister Imran Khan was invited to attend the Paris Peace Forum later in the year, the agenda of which will be climate change and global warming.

The session was then proceeded by Mr. Cartier, who highlighted the educational opportunities, eligibility criteria, job opportunities, linguistic challenges and scholarships available in France. Touching upon the diversity and quality of education in France, Mr. Cartier mentioned that France has 85 public universities, 220 business schools, 290 PhD schools and 1,200 research labs available for students at a very low tuition fee. 42% of PhD students are foreign students, which



shows France's willingness in terms of making higher education accessible for everyone. Additionally, he also pointed out that the low fee structure does not equate with substandard education.

Mr. Cartier emphasized that France is actively working on higher education exchange programs between countries and wants to engage the Pakistani students in multiple higher education opportunities available. He also elaborated that studying in France was possible even if one did not speak French as an option of enrolling in a program in English was available. He also explained that students could work for a certain number of hours per week to support themselves monetarily.

An interactive Q & A session ensued the informative session. Concluding the event, Dr. Baqai presented mementos to Dr. Baréty and his team.

