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OPENING REMARKS

This year, we have continued our efforts to promote impactful research and meaningful education. However, the University's activity was overshadowed by two key events at the national level.

Fueled by the Government's attempt for a legislative reform, disparities in the Israeli society – between right and left wing; Jews and Arabs; secular and religious – have grown ever deeper. Responding to this challenge, the University's leadership joined the civil movement in protest, calling for the strengthening of legal institutions, separation of powers, and the fortification of democracy.

The war that was imposed on Israel on October 7, 2024, presented a critical challenge for university operations, as well as to functioning of Israeli society at large. A year later and a war still rages across all Israel's borders. Men, women and children are still held hostage by a ruthless enemy and numerous families have lost their loved ones. At the University, many of our students and staff have been recruited, many others have been evacuated from their homes, the 2023-2024 academic year opened only in January 2024, and the University was closed for prolonged periods. Moreover, the war has threatened to fracture the interfaith and intercultural bonds amongst members of our community, which we have so carefully nurtured. In the face of these challenges, the University has taken a series of step to relieve tensions internally, and members of our community engaged in various initiatives that are intended to support victims of the war.

The University's commitment to driving academic impact towards the world's challenges has not diminished. First in higher education in Israel to place the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as its roadmap, the faculty and administration continue to extend the institution's commitment to human, societal, and environmental well-being. We have continued promoting impactful research. For example, through our the 'Impact Project' grant program, which promote the valorization of scholarly knowledge and the translation of research to societal and environmental solution. The winners of this year's competition – six multidisciplinary research projects, each leveraging cross-sectorial partnerships for combining research with practical utility - are described in this report. Similarly, we have continued promoting relevant, meaningful and impactful educational offerings. Among the various teaching-based initiatives and activities described in this report, we highlight here one program: a competition of 'Impactful Education' initiatives, which yielded five inspiring programs that blend quality education and public engagement.

We were pleased to see our efforts bear fruits, as reflected in the University of Haifa's performance in the 2023 Impact Ranking Competition. For the first time, we ranked among the Top 100 universities in the world by the Times Higher Education's Impact Rankings, maintaining our position as Israel's leader in sustainability. This competition is continually intensifying, with 2,100 universities participating this year (up from 1,700 last year). The rankings for each SDG reflect a university's achievements in terms of research, teaching, public engagement and internal operations. Among our standout achievements include placing:

- SDG4: Quality Education - top 70 globally for the second consecutive year (this year: 68th place)
- SDG5: Gender Equality: top 20 globally for the second consecutive year (this year: 17th place)
- SDG8: Decent Work and Economic Growth - top 100 globally for the second consecutive year (this year: 91st place)
- SDG 15: Life on Land - top 100 globally for the second consecutive year (this year: 82nd place)
- SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions - top 40 globally for the second consecutive year (this year: 32nd place)

In this report, we invite you to explore vignettes from the University of Haifa's activities that promote the sustainable development goals through our research, teaching, public engagement and the management of our internal operations.

Prof. Ofer Arazy



Director of Innovation & Sustainability