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Nominations Committee

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Vingt-deuxième session,
Comité des candidatures

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الدورة الثانية والعشرون
لجنة الترشيحات

大会
第二十二届会议
提名委员会

Item 56 of the provisional agenda

ELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

CURRICULUM VITAE

Mr Camille ABOUSSOUAN

(Lebanon)

- Born 30 August 1919 in Beirut.
- Secondary and university education in Lebanon, at Antoura College and the University of Saint Joseph.
- Law studies at the Ecole française de Droit in Beirut.
- As a trainee lawyer in 1942, he worked on the staff of the Service du contentieux juridique du Séquestre général français des biens ennemis (French legal claims department for confiscated enemy property) and the Office Economique français de guerre.
- Simultaneously active as a journalist.
- In 1944, with a group of friends, he staged the play 'The Persians' by Aeschylus in the temple of Bacchus at Baalbeck, himself taking the part of the leader of the Chorus, thereby creating what was to be, eight years later, the International Festival of Baalbeck.
- In 1945 he founded the review 'Les Cahiers de l'Est', after publishing a collection of literary texts.
- In 1948, Les Cahiers de l'Est was awarded the medal of the French Academy for the French Language.
- The French Academy's medal was presented to him in 1948.
- By 1950 nearly 1,000 studies and documents had been published in the review 'Les Cahiers de l'Est'.
- He attended the Nuremberg trials in 1946 and published a series of legal articles on the trials, in preparation for a thesis on genocide.
- He founded the PEN Club of Lebanon with twenty-four writers and eminent journalists. This club is affiliated to International PEN.

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- In 1947 he was invited [as an expert] to the Unesco conference on the freedom of information in Paris with eleven journalists and jurists from all over the world.
- Following this conference, he was invited by Julian Huxley, the Director-General of Unesco, to be responsible for relations between Unesco and the Middle East in the Executive Office of the Director-General in Paris, and to organize its initial activities.
- In 1953 he went back to Lebanon, where he resumed his activity as a lawyer. He was made a Knight of the Order of the Cedar.
- He was elected Secretary-General of the Lebanese National Commission for Unesco in 1953, and represented Lebanon regularly as a member of the delegation at General Conferences and other Unesco meetings until 1972. For nineteen years he was to be Secretary-General of the Lebanese National Commission for Unesco.
- He has been an active member of the Baalbeck Committee since 1955, being responsible for the Festival's explanatory programmes.
- In 1958, with some friends, he founded the 'Association pour la Protection des Sites et demeures anciennes au Liban' (Association for the Protection of Old Sites and Dwellings in Lebanon). He has collected 6,000 colour slides of old houses built from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century.
- He was elected Curator of the Nicolas Sursock Museum of Art, organizing its inauguration with a Salon of Lebanese artists in November 1961. He has since staged forty-three exhibitions including one on the discovery of icons with Arab descriptions in the Syro-Mesopotamian quadrilateral--post-Byzantine art--which have become known as the 'Melchite icons', and another on Islamic art from Lebanese collections. Explanatory catalogues were issued for these two exhibitions which were works of art and scholarship in their own right.
- Member of the group of fifteen 'Les amis du Livre' which awards literary prizes each year to Lebanese writers.
- He has travelled in countries relatively little known to the Lebanese, bringing back thousands of colour photographs and notes which he has used to give lectures and talks on Japan, Korea, the People's Republic of China, Central Asia, Mongolia, Soviet Union, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Cape Canaveral, the Mississippi Basin, Colorado Desert, New Mexico, California, Greece, Spain, Germany, Austria, Moldavia, Bukovina, Turkey, the Ivory Coast and Brazil.
- He has published long illustrated articles on his travels. His interviews with Mao-Tse-Tung, Marshal Chen Yi and Syngman Rhee attracted attention in 1956.
- In 1959, he spent two months at the United Nations in New York examining reports and work on the socio-economic situation of the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- He has attended international cultural conferences, in particular the annual congresses of International PEN, la Société des Gens de Lettres, and the International Rotary Club.
- In 1957, as Secretary-General of the National Commission, he brought together 700 universally acknowledged masterpieces of graphic art and painting--which the National Commission for Unesco displays regularly to Lebanese students and the general public--thereby creating the first collection for a 'Musée Imaginaire au Liban et en Orient'.
- In 1962, he organized the first exhibition of international standing, in Lebanon, of priceless manuscripts and rare books in Arabic, Armenian, Syriac, Turkish, Persian, French and English, from the eighth century to 1799.
- In 1962, he took part, as a founder member, in the setting up in Bucharest of the International Association of South-East European Studies, whose congresses were attended by the Lebanese committee until 1975, this in co-operation with the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies.
- He has given lectures on historical and cultural subjects in Lebanon, Egypt, France, the United States, Japan, Korea and Brazil.

- For thirty-five years he has collected rare works on the history of the Lebanon, Islam and the East, together with priceless books printed from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Until August 1978, his house in the mountains, in the war zone, contained a number of unique books. His library was made up of 12,000 volumes, collected by him, on historical, philosophical, geographical, scientific, literary and artistic subjects.
- He published a French translation of 'The Prophet' by Gibran Khalil Gibran which was published in Paris by Casterman in 1956 and which has been regularly republished, sales reaching 500,000 copies in 1983.
- He has written a wide range of articles for reviews and newspapers and a number of studies. Up to now, he has published nearly 400 editorials and studies in various publications such as Al-Ahram, L'Orient, Al-Safa, Le Réveil, La Revue du Liban, Magazine, as well as European and American reviews.
- Has on several occasions upheld the rights of Palestinian intellectuals at the annual congresses of International PEN, thereby supporting and encouraging a movement formed in Europe in 1972 to free Sabri Gerious, Mahmud Darwish and several other Palestinian writers.
- In 1978, at Unesco, he organized a conference with several international speakers on the plight of Lebanese children during the war.
- Since 1978, he has represented Lebanon as the national correspondent for the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, which brings together the French speaking states, attending its statutory conferences and working meetings.
- In 1980, he organized, at Unesco, an archaeological exhibition on the treasures of Tyre and was instrumental in the creation of an international association for the protection of the historical site of Tyre, in which the remains of eight civilizations are to be found.
- In 1982, he organized, at Unesco, an exhibition on 'Books in the Lebanon up to 1900' bringing together more than 200 valuable scientific documents and books. The exhibition catalogue of 418 illustrated pages is a work of exceptional importance on the emergence and development of printed works of Arabic between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. During his term of office at Unesco, he gave scores of lectures and talks broadcast on radio and television in France and other countries.
- In 1983, he organized, at Unesco, in co-operation with the Harvard Semitic Museum, an exhibition of photographs of the Lebanon taken during the nineteenth century by Bonfils. These photographs should assist in the work of architectural reconnaissance of the country which will have to be undertaken for the purpose of reconstruction following the devastation caused by the war.
- Office of the Order of the Cedar in 1963.
- Re-elected President of the PEN Club of Lebanon since 1970.
- Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur in 1974.
- President of the Rotary Club of Beirut in 1976.
- Ambassador of the Lebanon, and Permanent Delegate to Unesco since July 1978.
- Commandeur de l'Ordre de la Pléiade in 1980.