

National Conference of the Lebanese Women's Council 23-4-1983

After 8 years of war during which Lebanese women were busy being wives, mothers, breadwinners, comforters, nurses, volunteers, party members and sometimes fighters, the Lebanese Council of Women called its 105 affiliated associations for a National Conference on the theme "Role of Women in the Save Lebanon Campaign".

The conference, held at the "House of the Future", was attended by more than a thousand delegates in addition to eminent political, literary and diplomatic figures. At the end of the day it came out with the following recommendations and claims:

1. The Lebanese Women's Council, while it confirms the restoration of national unity, places its potentialities at the disposal of the Lebanese Government and claims a national policy integrating women in the process of reconstruction and development.
2. An official corps should be created for realizing this policy in cooperation with the Lebanese women's associations.
3. Instauration of a national system of education requiring loyalty to Lebanon alone, and, as a means to that end, creating a unified personal status code of laws leading to a solid national union.
4. All foreign troops without any exception, must be evacuated from Lebanon.
5. The new policy to be followed requires the following steps:
 - a. Studies on the status of women pointing out priorities regarding their needs and possibilities, including those of the rural woman, the elderly woman, the single woman and the war widows particularly.
 - b. Preparation of a plan of action in which women would participate at all levels and stages.
 - c. Planning an information policy which

aims to eliminate all prejudices regarding women and rehabilitate their image in the mass media, society and in the eyes of women themselves.

d. Amendments to the penal code and civil law for the purpose of eliminating all discrimination against women existing in any legal field or in the labor code.

e. Adoption by the Government of all international decrees and decisions relating to the Charter of Human Rights.

f. Giving women the opportunity for adequate training and education, which would ensure their participation in all aspects of development and their promotion to leading administrative positions in both the public and the private sector.

g. Intensification of woman's presence in non-government organizations such as the workers' syndicates, parties, associations and official delegations.

h. Elimination of both alphabetical and professional illiteracy among women.

i. Adaptation of the structure of the Women's Council and of its affiliated societies to the present needs of the country.

The final verdict at the end of the Conference was a mixed one. Many women who had hoped to come out with definite answers and a clear plan of action were disappointed to find out that the final recommendations were more a reiteration of old demands for the improvement of women's status in Lebanon. Others declared that despite these drawbacks, the Conference was a very important event for the Women's Movement in Lebanon because it reopened the dialogue between the various women's organizations who had worked in isolation during the last eight years of war.

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