

The Wellesley Conference on Woman & Development June 1-6, 1976

The Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) was invited to participate in the Wellesley Conference on Woman and Development in the first week of June 1976, at Wellesley College, U.S.A. The Conference was attended by 400 women researchers from various universities, institutes and research centers in Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

The IWSAW was represented by its director, Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr and the IWSAW secretary, Miss May Rihani. The papers presented contained comparative studies on the participation of women in the social development process and the impact of this participation on her role and status in society. Information contained analytical studies of countries, classes and cultural backgrounds as a basis for assessing the value of evolution and its orientation, as well as providing a criterion for comparing various types of cultural evolution which occurs today in developing countries.

The main work of the Conference concentrated on a definition of the relation between scientific research and the basic decisions which determine the societal processes. In other words, the main objective of the Conference was to determine the influence of research — its conclusions and recommendations — on basic state policy.

Sixty conference papers were presented, most of them by researchers from academic

centers of the First World. Academics who represented the Third World called for more opportunity for themselves to present their studies prepared on development activities in their own countries and their women's role.

The following list includes most of the topics discussed in the conference papers:

- Rural Women: Power, Status and Self-Perception
- Rural Women: Economic Activity
- Changing Roles of Women in the Structure of Production
- Impact of Religious Ideology on Sex Roles
- Impact of Changing Women's Roles on Family Structure and Family Dynamics
- Regime Strategies Toward Women in Relation to Development Goals
- Political Participation
- Women's Education and Labor Force Participation
- Informal Labor Markets
- Law as an Instrument on Social Change
- Methodology and Data Collection
- Women and Migration
- Informal Association Among Women
- Historical Study of Women and Family in Development
- Women's Association in the Public Sphere
- Women Elites: Routes to Power
- Protest Movements
- Legal Status of Women: The View from Below
- Women in Urban Occupations
- Fertility Decision-Making

At the end of the Conference after all the papers were presented, the participants stressed the following general topics in the summation for future conference emphasis:

- "Orientation of future Scientific Research".
- Looking Ahead. Research and Action on Women and Development".

"WORKSHOP ON ARAB WOMEN STUDIES" WELLESLEY, U.S.A. JUNE 6 - 8, 1976

This workshop was organized by the "Institute for Women Studies in the Arab World" in collaboration with the Ford Foundation. The Institute was represented by Dr. May Ahdab-Yehia, consultant to the Ford Foundation, who acted as director; Dr. Julinda Abu Nasr, Director of the Institute, who acted as co-director, and May Rihani, staff member of the Institute.

The workshop was attended by nine participants who represented Arab universities located in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Syria, and Tunisia, besides six local and international observers.

In her opening speech, Dr. Abu Nasr stated the objective of the I.W.S.A.W. which is "to encourage and evaluate research into the history, conditions and evolving needs of women and children in the Arab World". For this purpose it has started a documentation center in the BUC Library, containing an extensive collection of books and periodicals relating to women and family in the Arab World. Equally important is the preparation of an extensive bibliography of research and publications on Arab women since 1950. This bibliography will soon be available on request.

The main activity of the workshop consisted in the preparation of an outline for a university course focusing on the "comparative analysis of the change in women's status and their role in contemporary Arab society".

Other Activities: The participants attended a conference on "Women and Development", June 2-6 and joined in the Wingspread Workshop sponsored by the Johnson Foundation.