

Dr. Salwa Karam participates in conference “Arab Migrant Woman in Europe: The Present and the Future”

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At the invitation of the General Secretary of the Arab League office in Tunis, the Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC) at NDU participated in a conference entitled *Arab Migrant Woman in Europe: the Present and the Future*, which was held in Tunis on December 9, 2009.

The conference was organized by the Arab League Office in Tunis, and was made up of three sessions that emphasized the role and the accomplishments of Arab migrant women to Europe from different perspectives. Participants were scholars, researchers and professors from Algeria, Morocco, Tunis, and Lebanon.

LERC was represented by Dr. Salwa Karam, who has been a Researcher at the Center since 2007. Dr. Salwa Karam participated in the session on the *Economic and Social Role of the Arab Migrant Woman*. In her presentation, Dr. Karam introduced the history of Arab woman migration, and considered migration to Europe a natural fact due to the links between the European countries and Mediterranean states, amongst them Lebanon.



Representing LERC, Dr. Karam sits on the panel (Dec 2009).

In her presentation Dr. Karam emphasized the role of the Lebanese migrant women in developing their skills through education and training. The main objectives of their migration she said were education and professional development. However, some of them encountered many difficulties when migrating from Lebanon mainly due to their family situation, being married with children.

Dr. Salwa Karam noted the difference between those who migrated on their own to complete education and to search for better job opportunities, and those who were driven to migrate to Europe either with their husbands, families or alone due to the circumstances of war and insecurity in Lebanon.

According to Dr. Karam, the women who migrated to Europe did not express much willingness to return to Lebanon. They considered themselves as fully integrated in the European societies. This is due to various factors which are their dual citizenship, their stable economic and financial situation, and their access to social security as well as the opportunity to enhance their living conditions along with their families. In addition to this, marrying a European national is also a cause of their preference to stay in their countries of residence.

In concluding her presentation, Dr. Salwa Karam stressed the impact of Lebanese migration of women on Lebanese society. It is obvious that gender migration has boosted the integration of many young ladies in their country of destination, and has boosted negatively the brain drain from Lebanon. Every year Lebanon is losing more qualified people, which has a direct effect on the country's national economy and social structure.

Further, Dr. Karam considered that the Lebanese government should take serious measures to invite young Lebanese to return to Lebanon and to take part in the public and private sectors so as to enhance the opportunities of Lebanese economy towards growth and sustainable development, with more emphasis on investment in human capital.



Dr. Karam gives a statement to Tunisian Television at the end of the conference (Dec 2009).