

***LERC Participates in the Launch of the Media Campaign for the Amendment of the Lebanese Nationality Law***

Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010, Phoenicia Hotel, Beirut

Reported by Melkar El Khoury, LERC Research Affiliate

Mr. Melkar el Khoury, Research Affiliate at the Lebanese Emigration Research Center, represented the Center at the launch of the media campaign “Toward amending the Nationality Law in Lebanon” and the study on the “Situation of Lebanese Women Married to Non-Lebanese”, held on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2010 at the Phoenicia Hotel in Beirut.

The campaign is organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Committee for the Follow-Up on Women’s Issues.

At the opening session, Dr. Aman Kabbaa Chaarani, President of the National Committee for the Follow-Up on Women’s Issues considered in her speech the reason behind the discrimination between men and women over the right to grant their nationality to their children. Chaarani also noted that 77,400 individuals are negatively affected by this discriminatory law.

Ms. Marta Ruedas, UNDP Resident Representative in Beirut, stressed the importance of amending Lebanon’s nationality law, and the impact of such amendment on the lives of people who are deeply affected by the preset law.

From his side, Interior Minister Zaid Baroud said that the amendment of the nationality law is not only a legal matter but also a political one. Baroud declared that the nationality law reform, the 1994 naturalization decree and the law on the re-acquisition of the nationality of 1967 are interrelated.

Dr. Fehmiya Sharaf ed-Dinn also presented a study on the Situation of Lebanese Women Married to Non-Lebanese covering the period of 1995-2008. According to the study, around 18,000 Lebanese women from all sects were married to non-Lebanese. The study noted that the present nationality law is affecting the lives of 80,000 individuals.

At the end of the session, a documentary including testimonies and interviews with Lebanese women married to non-Lebanese was screened and several giant posters relating to this campaign were presented.