

"Family Planning Association Conference"

May 12-14, 1977

The "Family Planning Association," in Lebanon which was founded in 1969, organized an important conference on May 12-14, 1977, at the Carlton Hotel, Beirut, to discuss the general topic of "Demographic Policies in Lebanon". The conference was held under the patronage of Prime Minister Salim Al-Hoss and attended by a large audience representing the ministers of health and interior, the various religious institutions, universities, workers' syndicates, specialized associations, U.N. agencies, experts in development, economics, sociology and education.

The aim of the conference was to catch the attention of the authorities, and to affect public opinion for old demographic problems and new ones created by the war. The problems were fully examined and methods of handling them were proposed in five sessions. Papers were read and discussions were conducted concerning the following topics: demography and development, populations distribution in Lebanon, laws governing demographic questions, industrial concentration and its influence on demographic agglomeration, family planning, educational planning and influence on demographic movement, distribution of health services in accordance with demographic distribution, problems of the displaced and its psychological and social consequences, actual and social services in the light of public needs created by the war.

In the last session of the conference, the participants agreed on the text of the final report condensing the claims and recommendations of the conference members as follows:



1 — That a general census of the population be made, in view of obtaining adequate numerical information which would facilitate efficient social and economic planning.

2 — That regulations and laws concerning demographic problems in Lebanon be made with a realistic and responsible spirit, particularly those regarding minimum age for work, marriage, compulsory education, those concerning contraception, family planning, family structure and evolution.

3 — That scientific research be carried out on a larger scale and steps be taken to modernize and coordinate existing research centers.

4 — That developmental units and projects be distributed in various parts of the country to prevent the concentration of population in cities, and the mass emigration from rural districts into the capital and other urban districts.

5 — Women should be allowed more opportunities for participation in economic and social development. They need

guidance and training which would qualify them for more responsible positions and help them adjust to their particular situation as home-makers and mothers.

6 — An adequate health planning system is needed to allow the Lebanese individual a larger share in public health services and protective measures which will greatly minimize the future need for medical care. A wider geographic distribution of health services must be taken into consideration.

Problems which have a direct effect on family planning received special emphasis in the report: for example, educational planning, civic education in school curricula, public nursery schools, and the problems of displaced families.

Finally it was requested that instruction about family planning be made available to every citizen and that the laws restricting the right to apply necessary measures be amended. A general policy concerning this important question should be adopted by the government.