

# International Women's Day In Lebanon March 8

**For** the entire week preceding March 8, women's associations, leagues, and groups conducted seminars and panel discussions, to evaluate the status of women in Lebanon and the Arab world, to reiterate demands and emphasize reform, equality, and women's human and legal rights. Lebanese Women's Leagues and groups came together and organized a series of national panel discussions and lectures throughout the country.

The first set of lectures was held on Sunday, 1st of March, in the Northern city of Tripoli. Among the panelist was Mrs. Nayla Mouawad, the only female deputy in Parliament and the first in over twenty years. Mouawad noted that this year's International Women's Day revolves around the pressure to have Lebanon ratify The United Nation's article for "The Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" (which has been ratified by 109 countries including five Arab countries, namely Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen.)

The second set of lectures was held on Friday, March 6, in the Southern city of Saida and Baakline in Mount Lebanon; and again in Byblos, in the North on Saturday March 7.

The climax of this unified mobilization of Lebanese Women's League, culminated in a lecture sponsored by the President of the Republic in Beirut, on Sunday March 8. The first Lady, Mrs Mona Hrawi, gave the Key-note address on behalf of the President. The struggle to achieve women's rights should not be seen as a claim from Lebanon, but for Lebanon and for its development and progress. . . . After seventeen years of war, we demand the potential, capabilities,

and skills of Lebanese women and men be allowed to flourish openly and freely. . . . Hence, what would be the meaning of the women's struggle if it is not a national and developmental one. . . . Social development, educational development, cultural development and economic development are in need of the women's participation and contributions.

R.A.H



The First Lady: Mrs. Mona Elias Hrawi

## International Women's Day by the Child and Mother Welfare Society

**The** first lady was the guest of honor at another panel discussion organized by the Child and Mother Welfare Society (on March 2) in the occasion of the International Women's Day. In light of national reconstruction, Mrs Hrawi stressed the role of the family. Thus, the welfare of the country lies in the welfare of the family.

Mrs Hrawi brought forth four development goals: 1) To strengthen bonds between members of the family and promote cooperation with each other in order to improve living conditions, subsequently, contributing to the economic development of the country; 2) To expand and improve bonds between families that they may contribute to cultural and social development in the country; 3) To develop the national identity of the family and encourage its integration in national development; 4) To develop the element of human compassion and

understanding of human rights in the family and consequently, the country.

Hence, to support and encourage action in this direction, she announced that the Government has declared March 1 of every year to be the National Day of the Family.

*This year's activities were characterized by an explicit and open support from the government of post-war Lebanon, notably by Mr. Elias Hrawi, the President of the Republic himself. Could this mean a serious effort and intention to implement changes for equality and improve the conditions of women in Lebanon? (who admittedly is one of the most progressive countries in the Arab East). Or is it another series of scholastic panels. The first lady seems earnest and sincere in her claims and efforts we hope the rest of the Government is as sincere and willing to cooperate! •*