



KUWAIT: Fatima Hussein speaks during the open dialog. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



A general view of the audience.

KJA CHIEF RECALLS FEMALE STUDENTS EARLY STRUGGLES

By Faten Omar

KUWAIT: The Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre organized an open dialogue with Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) Chairperson Fatma Hussein on Tuesday. Hussein is an activist who has promoted equality for women in the media and during her diplomatic service, and found a platform as a writer, radio and television host. Hussein started the open dialogue by telling the audience about the recent history of Kuwait. "We had no electricity or water. We had only one Syrian doctor in our area," she recalled.

She added that the Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian teachers were credited with changing the curricula of public schools for girls for the better. "We were studying what was called a female curriculum. When I was eight years old, our school taught us how to give a baby a bath and how to cook!" she said. Hussein hailed the role of a Lebanese teacher who changed their view of life. "Also, a Palestinian teacher was teaching us English and Science. They challenged us to sit for the same exams as the boys. We were shocked that we actually succeeded and were the smartest, although we did not have the chance to study the same things that they did," Hussein said.

After that, the principal of the school kicked out the teachers and accused them of incitement, and that is when the rebellion began. "The school replaced our teachers with useless ones, so we protested, made flyers and started to teach each other. We formed a study circle where every girl who was good in a subject taught the rest of us," she said. But the protest did not succeed, because they were afraid of their families' reaction.

Asked about her beginnings in the journalism field, she said that it was by chance. "I studied in Egypt. All classes were full with not less than 600 students. So I chose a specialty that had fewer students, and it was jour-

nalism," Hussein said. Fatma Hussein Al-Qenai was born in 1937. She entered the hearts of all Kuwaiti families through radio and television, where she supported women's issues. She started to write when she was a student at school. She studied at Al-Sharqia and Al-Wasta schools and Al-Qablia high school. In 1960, she obtained a journalism degree from Cairo University. She then traveled to the US with her husband in 1961 and enrolled in two English courses. She started work at a New York radio station with a show called 'The diaries of a Kuwaiti woman in New York.' She also participated in the international women's conference in Beijing in 1995.

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CONFEREES IN LEBANON CALL FOR WOMEN POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT

BEIRUT: Officials taking part in a forum on Arab women as business leaders called yesterday for empowering female activists in the political realm. Enas Abdelaziz, Chief Executive Officer of Kuwait-headquartered Dotspace Group noted that Kuwaiti women have succeeded in occupying a noticeable status in the political field in Kuwait.

Digital revolution has removed some barriers facing the women with business aspirations, she said, indicating that a large number of businesswomen in Kuwait have succeeded in marketing their products online.

Business has become largely easy, with no need to rent a store or find a male partner, she says, also opining that the "major obstacle facing women is no longer men but technological illiteracy." Lebanon's former finance minister Rayya Al-Hassan said that the major challenges facing women in the Arab world is representation in the parliaments and municipal councils.

The ex-minister of environment, Mohammad Rahhal, noted that Lebanon has established the ministry of women affairs with aim of improving status of this segment. Earlier, Lebanese Minister of State for Women Affairs Jean Ogazapian, lauded in the inauguration statement the Arab women for making achievements at various levels while remaining a functioning



BEIRUT: CEO of Dotspace Group Enas Abdelaziz attends the forum. — KUNA

parent, indicating that he is seeking to prove that men are supporters of women and do not "constitute a hindrance in their way."

Alya Abbas, the general director of the ministry of economy, said 59 percent of the coun-

try's eligible voters are women, however they occupy only eight percent of the parliamentary seats and one percent of the cabinet posts. Up to 18 occupy very senior posts in the State administration. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah is honored during the forum. — KUNA

MINISTER UNDERLINES CITIZENSHIP INCULCATION

KUWAIT: Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah yesterday called for instilling citizenship and inculcating Kuwaiti identity into the minds of children through cooperation and solidarity. In a keynote speech during a forum held under the rubric: 'Kuwaiti Identity...Where to?' Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who doubles as Acting Minister of Information, said the mission of preserving identity cannot be restricted to governmental bodies as social and religious agencies should be involved. It is the duty and responsibility of state institutions and departments to contribute to establishing and promoting this concept in society positively, he said, pointing to social variation.

He emphasized that all mass media, ministries and civil society should work together in order to establish the concept of Kuwaiti identity. The minister hoped that these fora would lead to a further promotion of identity, while stressing the significance of scientific research to finding a mechanism to settle identity and educate young generations.

Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) Director-General Ahmad Al-Athari said his authority has a social and academic role to play so as to meet the scientific, technical and social requirements of the Kuwaiti society. Speaking at the PAAET-organized forum, Athari said the authority attaches much attention to the values of loyalty and strong

Kuwaiti identity in its theoretical and applied curricula. He noted that the forum manifests the historical, cultural and social dimensions of the Kuwaiti society, in addition to the role of young people in this regard. On his part, Director-General of the Public Authority for Youth (PAY) Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi said the history of Kuwait was based on tradition, challenge, firmness and bravery.

He underscored the need to hold more forums aiming at promoting and consolidating the Kuwaiti identity. Mutairi spoke highly of the PAAET's vital role in the promotion of national identity by means of launching programs aiming at instilling Kuwaiti culture and creating a generation aware of Kuwaiti values and tradition. — KUNA