

The Status of Arab Women

The stated goal of the International Women's Year, held in Mexico City in 1975 was «The integration of women in the development process as equal partners with men». In her book, *Le Deuxieme Sex* (The Second Sex), Simone de Beauvoir attributes the subordinate status of women to their identification with the domain of «nature» and the relationship of «nature» to the domain of «culture». She argues that nature is always identified as being active. Women are constrained by the biological facts of reproduction and lactation, and hence they are less free than men to be culturally creative. She adds that man cannot live and reproduce himself without women, and this need for women is at the root of the ambivalence displayed by men towards women.⁽¹⁾ Arab women and women everywhere have been the target of many development programmes and projects in order to achieve the stated goal of the International Women's Year. *Al-Raida* endeavours to shed light on the status of Arab Women, especially on their role in economic and social development.

This issue contains two pages in Arabic which makes a new addition to this newsletter. The Arabic pages have been launched to meet the urgent demand of our readers and will endeavour to cover the most significant cultural events in the Arab world. The Arabic pages of this issue cover an interview with Suzanne Mubarak, President of the Friends of the Children's Library in Egypt. An article on the organization of the Friends of the Children's Library is included in English for our English speaking readers.

We are grateful for the group of eminent researchers and writers who have been contributing to *al-Raida* and to our subscribers for their encouragement and support. Your suggestions and comments will be of great value. We look forward to more contributions to make our objectives achievable — an objective that advocates creativity, knowledge, learning and awareness.

(1) Rassam, Amal. «Arab Women: the Status of Research in the Social Sciences and the Status of Women» in *Women in the Arab World*, UNESCO: 1984. pp. 2-3.