

ARTICLE DETAILS	
PUBLICATION	The Jordan Times
DATE	Monday March 05, 2007
PAGE NUMBER (S)	2
DIMENSION	Height :30cm Width : 26.5cm
LANGUAGE	English
ARTICLE TYPE	Press Conference
COLOR	YES/NO
HEADLINE	Conference Seeks To Identify Challenges Facing Local Businesswomen

## Conference seeks to identify challenges facing local businesswomen

Participants to draw up 5-year action plan to boost professional career women's contribution to trade, economic decision-making

by rana namrouqa

AMMAN — Her Majesty Queen Rania on Sunday attended the inauguration of the First National Businesswomen's Conference, which seeks to identify and address the challenges facing businesswomen in the country.

Organised by the Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women (JFBPW), the conference brings together 120 professional businesswomen and more than 200 representatives of the public and private sectors who are discussing several issues including women and trade, use of IT in women's businesses, women and economic decision-making positions as well as regulations and laws affecting businesswomen in Jordan.

JFBPW Chairman Senator Wijdan Saket said despite the development of education and the easy access to information, there is still a lack of support for women's rights.

"We are surprised that up until this day we still witness strong discrimination against women, especially with the existence of a constitution that guarantees women's rights," Saket said

at the opening ceremony.

Stressing the need for the immediate amendment of current legislation, JFBPW CEO Rana Akhal said regulations of the Jordanian chambers of commerce and industry don't oblige them to employ women members in their boards, noting that only seven of the country's 50 pioneering companies have women in their boards



Her Majesty Queen Rania with a recipient of the Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women's plaque of honour. Several local and international organisations and companies were recognised for their support of businesswomen's issues in Jordan during the inauguration of the First National Businesswomen's Conference on Sunday.

of directors.

According to studies carried out by the JFBPW, over the past three years women's participation in the workforce has increased to 27.8 per cent compared to 10 per cent in the 1960s.

Women's participation in the workforce in the Middle East and North Africa region, however, stood at 32

per cent in 2005.

Reviewing women's status and participation in the labour market, Akhal said 39 per cent of women owned businesses concentrated in the services sector, 20 per cent in manufacturing sector (food and clothing) and 15.1 per cent in retail trade.

Meanwhile, the percentage of self-employed women in the northern and the central regions was higher than in the south, with a total of 40.5 per cent in Irbid and 53.6 per cent in Amman.

The studies also showed that only 5 per cent of

women-run businesses were in the ICT sector, while 8.3 per cent of businesswomen use advanced technology in their companies such as electronic office networks. They also revealed that 6.3 per cent of businesswomen sell their goods online and 7.1 per cent purchase goods online.

During the opening, Saket announced the establishment of a new Board of Trustees at the JFBPW to support the forum's leadership and management and ensure that all the country's sectors benefit from its services.

Building on the two-day

conference's recommendations, participants will draw up a five-year action plan to boost local businesswomen's contribution to trade and economic decision-making.

In addition, the proposals will be the foundation for launching various initiatives that will empower women to occupy decision-making positions.

Queen Rania, who is honorary president of JFBPW, presented the forum's plaque of honour to several local and international organisations and companies in appreciation for their support of business-

women's issues in Jordan. Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit, Senate President Zeid Rifaf, Lower House Speaker Abdul Hadi Majali and several ambassadors attended yesterday's event.

The JFBPW was established in 1967 as a non-profit organisation seeking to develop, empower and advocate for local business and professional women.

It has several socio-economic objectives, including attracting and developing a cadre of active, career-minded professionals prepared to take up leadership positions and a more dynamic role in the country.



Arabian Communications