British Ambassador: The public has the right to know about all parliamentary activities and decisions

Monday November 16, 2009

AUB's Journalism Training Program (JTP) in cooperation with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy launched a media workshop Monday, November 16. The week-long workshop will focus on media coverage of Lebanon's parliament activities and will include lectures, practice sessions, and training videos, which will be presented by Magda Abu-Fadil, director of JTP. The workshop opened with speeches by Mohammed Ballout, head of the media department of the Lebanese Parliament; HE Frances Guy, British ambassador to Lebanon; and AUB Vice-President for Regional External Programs Hassan Diab.

Ballout stated that "developing the parliamentary media and covering the parliamentary sessions and activities do not aim only at transmitting the news to the public but also at strengthening the trust in parliamentary work and democracy. The more this trust is deepening in the public's eyes, the more the public participates in politics and decision-making."

Ambassador Guy expressed pride that the British Embassy, through the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, would be taking part in improving the cooperation between the parliament and the media. She also stressed the importance of the transparency of all parliamentary actions.

Participants included Manal Shayya (An-Nahar), Denise Haddad (Al-Safir), Hala Birak (Al-Diyar), Akram Hamdan (Future Newspaper), Hanadi Al-Samra (Al-Liwaa ), Manal Abss (Al-Hayat), Hala Al-Husseiny (National News Agency), Tamam Hamdan (National News Agency), Ahmad Ezzedine (Al-Anwar), Reeman Daou (Tele Liban), Ali Noureddine (NBN), Clara Geha (New TV), Abbas Fneish (Manar TV), Darine Al-Helwa (Future TV), Edmond Sassine (OTV), Joyce Akiki (MTV), and Elham Nejm (Nour TV).

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy is an independent public body sponsored by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The foundation seeks "to strengthen the institutions of democracy, principally political parties, parliaments, and the range of institutions that make up civil society."