



## OSB Celebrates Completion of E-books Project

Friday April 9, 2010

A ceremony celebrating the completion of the E-books Project at AUB was held at the Suleiman Olayan School of Business on Thursday, April 8, 2010.

The event was sponsored by AUB, Beirut Book Capital 2009, and the Ministry of Culture.

Former Prime Minister Salim El-Hoss and former Minister Charles Rizk, both founders of the Association of Development Studies (*Nadwat Dirasat Inma'iyyah*), were honored during the ceremony.

The E-books Project aims at demonstrating how Information Technology can be used to sustain development and preserve heritage for future generations. Thirty-six books, published in hard copy, have been converted by the Association of Development Studies into online soft copies.

Provost Ahmad Dallal highlighted the fact that it is important for Lebanon to keep pace with developments in today's wired world.

Since its establishment in 1964, the Association of Development Studies has turned 36 of its book publications into e-books. Dallal informed the audience that AUB's Jafet Library currently has 115 scholarly electronic databases on a wide range of academic topics. The Saab Medical Library also has a large number of e-databases on medical topics. The e-books project is an "important addition to this puzzle," said Dallal.

Rafik Kattan, director of the Association of Development Studies, highlighted the role of sustainable development in the progress of a nation. Education, argued Kattan, is an important factor in development; it transcends political and social differences.

Professor Ibrahim Othman, E-books Project director, noted that Beirut is adopting the e-book technology in a world that has become increasingly inter-linked and connected. Othman noted that the number of e-book readers has increased in recent years. The coming 10 years, he added, are expected to witness an ever-growing trend in e-book technology. The Arab world, said Othman, is nevertheless still lagging behind in Information Technology. Devoting one week each year for raising awareness about the importance of sustainable development is very important, said Othman.

Minister of Culture Salim Wardy said that e-books are a new means of encouraging reading. Although Lebanon is a hub for education, culture and art, continued Wardy, it needs to sustain its development.

Former Premier Salim El-Hoss stated that issues of development have long occupied men of thought in Lebanon. He noted, however, that there exists a big gap between Lebanon

and developed countries, such as the United States, England and Japan. “Trying to bridge this gap,” says El-Hoss, “has been one of the aims of the Association of Development Studies.”

A brief demonstration of how hard formats are converted into online formats and placed on a new Sony e-book reader was presented to the audience. The Sony e-book reader is user-friendly, said Kouatly, which, it is hoped, would encourage reading.

Hoss and Rizk were each presented with a plaque from the E-books Project committee at the Olayan School of Business at AUB in recognition of their invaluable contributions to culture and sustainable development.