

Saudi ambassador helps promote Saudi culture at AUB event

Thursday, May 6, 2010

The Saudi Cultural Club at AUB celebrated Saudi Cultural Heritage Day, 'Al-Janadriyya 2', taking as themes the holy city of Mecca as well as the camel, or "the ship of the desert."

In a cultural evening, held on May 5, 2010 on AUB'S Green Oval, decorated with divan-like seats and carpets, Saudi Ambassador Ali Asseri, commended all students for their efforts in organizing an event which links Saudis to their cultural heritage. "What we witness tonight is such a unique chance to share Saudi culture with students of different cultures at this unique university," said Asseri, adding that he hopes the event would lead to a cultural exchange of ideas.



Saudi Cultural Attache Ayman Maghrabi highlighted the importance of engaging in dialogue with other cultures in order to transfer the right image about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). "I stand today on fertile grounds, namely the AUB, that has graduated many people from the region.... Tonight's festival reflects genuine Arab customs," noted Maghrabi, adding that Saudis should make sure they preserve their Saudi identity while opening up to other cultures.

The advisor of the Saudi Cultural Club at AUB, Fawwaz Tuqan, also congratulated club members for their efforts in organizing a rich cultural event that brings different cultures together. Club President Mohammed Madani highlighted the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of Saudi Arabia. "We hope, through this event, to familiarize our fellow students with Saudi traditions and values," noted Madani.

As the camel strolled right down the Green Oval, other traditional Saudi items were on display, including Saudi coffee pots, incense burners, an old Saudi musical instrument-- the 'rababa' -- which is used by nomads to sing Bedouin songs. "It is good to see the Saudi students wearing their traditional dresses," commented Asseri on the sidelines. "It shows how proud they are of their native belonging," he added.

The cultural evening featured singing of traditional Saudi and Egyptian songs, with lute ('Oud') accompaniment, in addition to poetry reading by AUB students. Traditional Saudi coffee and dates were served throughout the event.

Cultural exchange between Saudi and Lebanese students is necessary, noted Madani. "Many of our classmates do not know much about our country, our traditions and our habits; they simply think of us as desert dwellers," continued Madani.

Exposing students to diverse cultures is part of AUB's mission. AUB has long been a hub for students from diverse cultural, social and economic backgrounds. It has always encouraged dialogue and taught cultural tolerance.

"Saudis are desert people," said Madani, "and we are proud of it." However, "Saudi Arabia has made significant strides in the field of technology," he added.