LEBANON

VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNR) ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)

Lebanon Voluntary National Review of **Sustainable Development Goals, 2018**

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List of Acronyms

AUB	American University of Beirut
BDL	Banque du Liban
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
CAS	Central Administration of Statistics
CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction
CEDRE	Conference Economique pour le Developpement par les Reformes et avec les Entreprises
CHUD	Cultural Heritage and Urban Development
CIP	Capital Investment Programme
CNRS-L	National Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon
CSO	Civil society organisations
DG	Director General
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EDL	Electricité du Liban
EIB	European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
GBPTP	Greater Beirut Public Transport Project
GCNL	UN Global Compact Lebanon
GEF	Global Environment Facility
Gg CO2	Gigagrams (Gg) carbon dioxide equivalent
GGI	Gender Gap Index
GHG	Greenhouse gas
IDAL	Investment Development Authority of Lebanon
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IPP	Independent Power Producers
ISG	International Support Group
LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
LEPAP	Lebanon Environmental Pollution Abatement Project
LIRA	Lebanese Industrial Research Achievement programme
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MEHE	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
MoPH	Ministry of Public Helath
MoSA	Ministry of Social Affairs
NAMA	Nationally appropriate mitigation action
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NCLW	National Commission for Lebanese Women
NDC	Intended nationally determined contribution
NEAP	Ministry of Environment's National Environmental Action Plan
NEEAP	National Energy Efficiency Action Plan
NEEREA	National Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Action

NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NPMPLT	National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese Territory
NPTP	National Poverty Targeting Programme
NREAP	National Renewable Energy Action Plan
NSSF	National Social Security Fund
NWSS	National Water Sector Strategy
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD DAC	Organisation for Economic Cooperation & Development,Development Assistance Committee
OMSAR	Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform
PCBs POPs	Polychlorinated Biphenyls PCB
PCM	Presidency of the Council of Ministers
PVE	Preventing violent extremism
RACE 2	Reaching All Children with Education
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012
S2R2	Support to RACE 2(World Bank-funded programme)
SCP	Sustainable consumption and production
SDC	Social development centre
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SDMX	Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
SODEL	Sustainable oil and gas development in Lebanon
TVET	Technical vocational education and training
UN	United Nations
UN DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme in Lebanon
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund in Lebanon
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
USD	United States dollar
UTDP	Urban Transport Development Project
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WB	The World Bank
WEF GGR	World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report

Executive **Summary**

1. Lebanon is an upper middle-income country with a democratic political system. Its liberal economy largely relies on services, and its society is characterised by cultural diversity and openness. After a new President was elected in October 2016 and a national conciliation government was formed in December 2016, the government's engagement towards Agenda 2030 has accelerated.

2. Lebanon's first VNR takes place at a time when the country's political scene has found a promising equilibrium. At this juncture, the domestic political scene is in consensus about the need to maintain stability. This is met by a similar objective on the international front. The international community has made it clear that Lebanon's political and economic stability is essential, including for the overall region, and needs to be preserved. This was demonstrated during the ISG meeting, and the three conferences in support of Lebanon that followed it.

Institutional Mechanism

3. A national committee to oversee the roll-out of the SDGs was formed in 2017 and is chaired by the prime minister. In addition to the director generals of line ministries, this committee includes representatives from civil society and the private sector to ensure the agenda is widely owned. One of the committee's initial priorities was contributing to the VNR.

4. Sub-committees (thematic groupings) have been established along the pillars of the 2030 Agenda—people, planet, prosperity and peace, with partnership mainstreamed, and a dedicated statistical taskforce set up. Coordinators were appointed for each of the thematic groupings.

5. Three workshops were conducted with government officials, the private sector and CSOs to raise their awareness of the SDGs and to launch the VNR preparations. CSOs also held regional consultations and a national website for SDGs was created and populated.

6. A legislative institutional mechanism was established to follow-up and advance progress towards the SDGs in Lebanon. The SDG parliamentary committee has started mapping existing legislation related to Agenda 2030.

Progress towards the SDGs

7. Lebanon achieved at least seven MDG targets, mainly in health, primary education and gender equality in education. The remaining targets showed mixed results, were not applicable or were not expected to be achieved on time—the most salient of which relate to poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Today Lebanon faces the same development challenges. The situation has been exacerbated by the impact of the Syria crisis. While Lebanon has shown exceptional solidarity, this has come at a high cost, compounded pre-existing development challenges and stretched Lebanon beyond its limits.

Progress towards 'People' SDGs

8. People are at the core of the government's focus. Poverty rates, already high before the Syrian crisis, have worsened. The communities that host the majority of displaced Syrians lack the resources and capacity to address the increased demand for public and social services. This has not halted the government's efforts to create a better environment for all, including through national programmes (such as the NPTP) that enhance social assistance

for the most vulnerable citizens. The government also continues to offer numerous types of social services, such as health and education, universal subsidies for electricity, bread and tobacco farmers, and interest subsidies for housing and other productive sectors. The government also provides various social protection schemes to its own employees and the formal private sector delivered through the NSSF.

9. The quality and coverage of health services have been improving and universal access to healthcare services is on the right track. Targets related to maternity and children under five years of age score well, and reproductive health services are accessible to nearly all Lebanese. The government's health sector strategy 'Health 2025' will provide universal health coverage. SDG targets have been integrated in the plans and strategies of the MoPH.

10. Progress in the education sector has been sustained. Lebanese citizens, especially male and female youth, have very high literacy rates, and a 90 percent enrolment rate has been achieved in primary education—mainly because primary school education is compulsory and free in public schools. Gender parity exists in almost all education indicators, including equal access to TVET and universities. A pilot project is underway to establish a large number of resource rooms in public schools for children with different learning needs. To address disparities in quality between private and public education, and between geographical regions, the MEHE developed a National Education Plan for 2010–2015. However, the government had to reshuffle its priorities to manage the large influx of displaced Syrians while continuing its long-term reforms. Consequently, the RACE 2 strategy (2017–2021) was developed with a hybrid approach to support quality and systems alongside enrolment targeted at Lebanese and Syrian students. To continue to deliver on the fourth goal—all children completing a quality primary and secondary education—the Lebanon Education 2030 Strategy is being developed, taking into consideration fiscal and legal requirements. In the first half of 2018, MEHE launched the national strategic framework for TVET (2018–2022). Lebanon is also developing an action plan for its existing Youth Policy that will help reach SDG4.

11. The focus on education has not altered the government's attention on women who remain at the core of its policies. For the first time in Lebanon's history a Minister for Women's Affairs has been appointed. Women's low participation in political and economic spheres is slowly improving. During the last Parliamentary elections women gained two additional seats and now hold six seats out of the 128 in the new Parliament. This shows some progress in this area. To help combat domestic violence, legislation has been passed to protect women and children although its implementation will require further efforts. One of the most challenging issues remains passing on nationality when Lebanese mothers are married to foreign nationals.

Progress on Planet

12. The government is striving for better environmental conditions for its citizens. Lebanon has shown its commitment towards international environmental conventions and set out its agenda on natural resource management and protection. Land management, water and air pollution and solid waste management, remain the main impediments to environmental sustainability.

13. The national water sector strategy aims to develop the infrastructure for surface water storage and recharging groundwater, and resolve transmission and distribution problems. The CIP includes projects to increase water supply, improve existing systems and provide additional surface water sources. The water sector strategy intends to increase coverage of the wastewater collection network and treatment capacity. The CIP supports this with plans to complete ongoing projects, upgrade the coastal treatment plants for secondary treatment and expand existing plants.

14. Although thermal generation remains the main source of energy in Lebanon, the country is slowly moving towards increasing reliance on renewable sources, and has recently started planning for offshore petroleum resource exploration. Through its electricity sector emergency

plan, the government aims to bridge an electricity generation supply-demand gap and resolve transmission and distribution problems. The strategy aims for better accessibility and reliability while improving energy efficiency and growing the share of energy from renewable sources, knowing that emissions from electricity generation constitute more than half of total emissions in the country.

15. National and sectoral legislation, policies and strategies in Lebanon have partially incorporated sustainability principles in line with the country's commitments under multilateral environmental treaties, protocols and conventions. Lebanon now has an environment protection law, a national biodiversity action plan, and an action plan for SCP for the industrial sector.

16. Following its signature of the Paris agreement on climate change, Lebanon seeks to have dedicated legislation to address climate change. Several policies and pieces of legislation contribute towards its climate change commitments such as those on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and air pollution.

Progress on Prosperity

17. The government presented its Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment to CEDRE. The vision outlines plans to spur economic growth, create decent jobs and provide a conducive environment for private sector investment in the medium to long term. This will be achieved by firstly increasing the level of public investment in the short-term by implementing projects for which foreign loans have been committed and embarking on new infrastructure projects to lay the basis for long-term growth with an increased private sector role. The vision also includes ensuring economic and financial stability through fiscal adjustment, undertaking sectoral and governance reforms to ensure the sustainability of the infrastructure investments, and developing a strategy to diversify Lebanon's productive and services sectors. Consultations around the vision took place with various political parties, the private sectorand other relevant stakeholders including civil society.

18. An ambitious CIP is at the heart of the vision. It outlines priority infrastructure projects to support the recovery of economic growth and help meet the SDGs. A National Budget for 2017 was passed for the first time in 12 years and a Budget for 2018 has since been passed that projects a decline in the deficit through a number of fiscal measures. A law on public-private partnership was ratified after more than a decade of discussions inside Parliament.

19. Complementing its efforts to create employment opportunities through CEDRE, the government is working on a labour strategy to improve the protection of workers, especially in the informal sector. The challenges faced by a majority of Lebanese businesses are being addressed through the SME strategy and the entrepreneurship ecosystem, both currently under development. Industrial sustainability is considered a priority and an SCP action plan for the industrial sector is in place. A strategic plan to expand the domestic market and increase industrial exports is also operational.

20. Facing rapid urban expansion, the National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese Territory remains the country's overarching framework for urban development. While Lebanon's largest cities were able to preserve their historical heritage, the housing challenge linked to urbanisation is being addressed through subsidised lending for low- and middle-income households. Work is also underway to ease traffic and congestion through a large public transport project in Beirut and its suburbs.

Progress on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

21. The government is fully aware that none of the SDGs can advance without "peace, justice, and strong institutions". To that end, a new parliamentary elections' law that ensures a wider representation based on proportionality was ratified in 2017.

22. Taking advantage of a window of relative stability, the government pushed for reforms to enhance the governance regulatory framework. The law to fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism coupled with the legislation on tax transparency and access to information were ratified. The law to criminalize torture was also ratified as well as that on establishing a National Human Rights' Institute. Looking forward, improving government statistics will definitely constitute a cross cutting reform that facilitates mapping SDGs and targets and will ultimately serve to improve policy making.

23. Despite the challenges of the fiscal and trade deficits, coupled with the high debt burden and slow economic growth, Lebanon is determined to mobilize the resources needed for implementing the 2030 Agenda. In this endeavor, strengthening the country's international partnerships as well as those with the private sector will be essential. Linkages with the large Lebanese diaspora, as evidenced by FDI and remittances, are part of Lebanon's characteristics and constitute a crucial aspect of the Lebanese economy.

24. The parliamentary elections held in May 2018 and the subsequent government formation will constitute new grounds for taking forward the government's medium-term vision while covering all dimensions of sustainable development, with well-chosen priority challenges to be tackled.

I Introduction and Background

Lebanon is a small upper middle-income country with a democratic political system. It has a liberal economy based on entrepreneurship and largely reliant on services, and a society characterised by cultural diversity and openness. Located at the centre of one of the most volatile regions of the world, Lebanon has been exposed to numerous security, political and economic shocks since the end of the 1990s yet managed to weather many storms: the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005, Israeli attacks in 2006, and the repercussions of the protracted Syrian crisis. Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria in 2011, domestic political tensions have intensified, amid regional geo-political instability, and these have weighed heavily on the Lebanese economy. By the end of 2016, when a new President of the Republic had been elected after a 29-month vacuum and a national unity government was formed, Lebanon embarked on a trajectory of positive change and increased stability. In parallel, the government's engagement towards Agenda 2030 accelerated and included a commitment to produce the country's first VNR for the international community in 2018.

Lebanon's past performance towards the MDGs was mixed. While notable progress was made in education and health, and the country has a relatively good record on gender equality, important development challenges remain, including poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. Lebanon's development has been impacted by the Syria crisis. While Lebanon has shown exceptional solidarity to displaced from Syria, this has come at a high cost, compounded pre-existing development challenges and stretched Lebanon to its limits.

The Government of Lebanon estimates that the country now hosts 1.5 million Syrians who have fled the conflict. This includes over one million displaced people registered with the UNHCR and 31,000 Palestinians displaced from Syria, in addition to 35,000 Lebanese returnees from Syria and a pre-existing population of around 200,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In mid-2017 Lebanon's population of displaced people is close to a quarter of its citizen population. Ninety percent of displaced people live in the country's 251 most vulnerable localities, which lack the resources and capacity to cope with the increased demand on public and social services.

The conflict in Syria has also stunted Lebanon's economic growth and development trajectories: traditional markets have shut down, investors' confidence has declined and GDP growth is barely one percent, a decrease from an average of eight percent in the three years before the conflict. According to the World Bank, the cumulative cost to Lebanon (in terms of lowering the GDP growth rate) since the start of the conflict was USD18.15 billion through 2015. Exports have declined by about one-third as a result of a loss of markets and trading routes. Approximately 200,000 Lebanese have been pushed into poverty and the overall unemployment rate has doubled to about 20 percent. Gaps between the supply and demand for infrastructure, especially electricity, have widened with the presence of the displaced. The existing public infrastructure has deteriorated, in part for the same reason. For example roads are dealing with a 15 percent increase in nation wide traffic, according to World Bank estimates. From the end of 2011 to 2016, the increase in Lebanon's public debt that has resulted from financing Syria crisis-related incremental deficits, and the interest on the debt, is around USD6 billion. The UNDP estimates that government expenditure increased by USD1 billion from 2012 to 2016 as a result of providing electricity for the displaced.

The Lebanese government—in collaboration with the UN, national and international NGOs, and other donors—has developed the LCRP as a coordinated response to address the impact of the Syria crisis on Lebanon. The LCRP goes beyond humanitarian assistance to displaced people and other vulnerable groups. It takes a multi-dimensional, integrated humanitarian and developmental approach, in line with the SDGs and Agenda 2030's principle of 'leaving no one behind'.

This report is Lebanon's first VNR. It provides a general overview of the country's conditions since 2015, following the last report on MDGs that was published in 2014. The report aims to provide an overview of the Lebanon's current SDG-related conditions and be a baseline for a longer-term process to fulfil Agenda 2030. It points to some key challenges and gaps along the way. The report also introduces existing national institutional and policy frameworks to address SDGs, support the nascent system working towards the SDGs, coordinate the actors involved, and increase awareness of Agenda 2030.

Lebanon's 2018 VNR consists of seven chapters, including this brief background and introduction (chapter 1). Chapter 2 is a short description of the methodology used to write the VNR. Chapter 3 presents the institutional mechanisms that the Government of Lebanon established in mid-2017 to implement the SDGs. Chapter 4 explores the alignment between the SDGs and existing national frameworks, and the integration of the three dimensions of development in policy making. Chapter 5 is an overview of Lebanon's progress towards the seventeen SDGs and the existing relevant national policies. It groups SDGs by the pillars of Agenda 2030: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships, and cites some positive examples, structural issues and key challenges. Chapter 6 highlights the non-governmental stakeholders engagement in SDGs and the VNR process, particularly the progress made by the private sector, civil society organizations, and the global compact network Lebanon. The report concludes in chapter 7.

II Methodology

This report was prepared by collecting information from primary sources and reviewing secondary information sources: official documents and data.

The primary sources included extensive consultation with key ministries, Parliament, and other state entities. A short questionnaire was sent to all relevant public-sector administrations to collect information on national policies and strategies related to the SDGs. Twenty-three individual stakeholder interviews were held, including with academia. Three workshops—with civil society, the business sector and government representatives—were another primary source of information. Civil society representatives ran a series of regional workshops, with a large number of NGOs, to raise awareness about the SDGs and Agenda 2030, to create inclusive partnerships and ownership, and to involve everyone.

The secondary sources consisted of a desk review of ministry reports, sectoral strategies, plans and legislation. Reports by UN agencies and well-established international organisations were used, as well as other thematic publications. Collecting data to measure SDG indicators was challenging because the related national committee had been recently formed when this report was being compiled. The report, therefore, relies on data already available from Lebanon's CAS, ministerial and other public documents. Data was also drawn from the Arab Development Portal and the UN's SDG indicators global database. The validation process included thorough review of the content of the report by the various stakeholders, including the development of certain sections of the report. The VNR broadly follows the UN Secretary-General's updated voluntary common reporting guidelines.

III SDGs Ownership and Institutional Mechanism

To fulfil its commitment to the SDGs, the Government of Lebanon has established a robust institutional mechanism that ensures the wide participation of relevant stakeholders. It uses an inclusive, whole-of-government approach and engages civil society and the business sector.

In June 2017, the Council of Ministers established a national committee to oversee and guide the roll-out of the SDGs in Lebanon. The committee is chaired by the prime minister and includes more than 50 state officials at DG level to ensure work continues regardless of political developments. The committee also includes civil society and the private sector representatives to ensure an open, inclusive and participatory approach. The committee is mandated to act as a coordinating body; to raise awareness of and integrate the SDGs into national policies and programmes; to build a national database to assess achievement towards the SDGs; and to regularly review progress using the VNR process. The Office of the Prime Minister is the committee's secretariat and it has already launched a website on the SDGs and progress being made in Lebanon.[1]

The UNCT in Lebanon is supporting the Government of Lebanon to roll out the SDGs. Different UN agencies are providing technical support directly to relevant ministries and stakeholders.

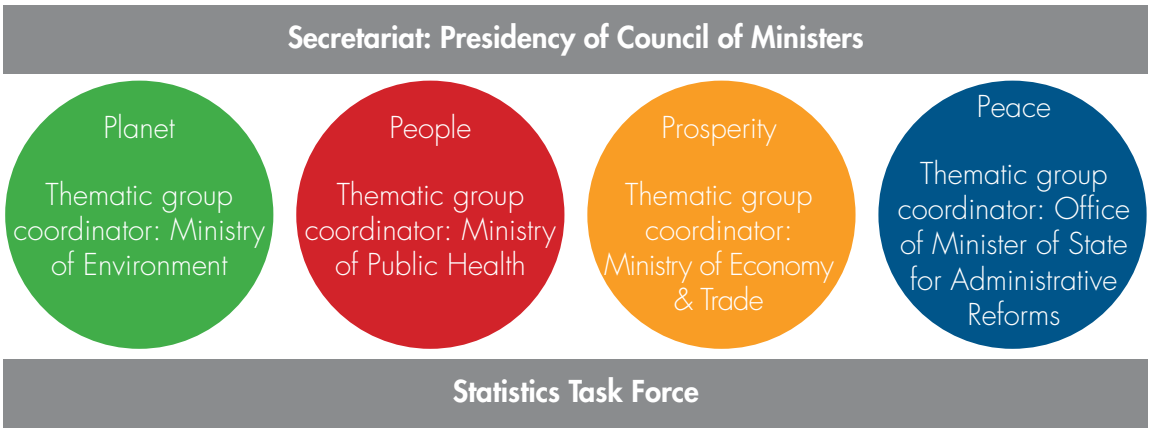
The Office of the Prime Minister, supported by the UNCT in Lebanon, held three workshops towards the end of 2017 to start developing the VNR. The first workshop targeted the national committee and aimed to increase its awareness of the SDGs and their implications for Lebanon. More importantly, it included a discussion on the roles of different actors and generated a wide sense of ownership. There was a high level of engagement by government officials following this workshop, and more than 40 public agencies responded positively to a short questionnaire on policies, strategies and programmes relevant to the SDGs. Some provided well-developed medium-term strategies that showed how they were already making progress to integrate the SDGs into their strategic planning.

A second workshop targeted the private sector and involved 20 business representatives from different sectors across Lebanon. This affirmed the importance of partnerships with the public sector. The representatives considered their role and the value they can add to the SDGs and Agenda 2030, despite the difficulties they face under the prevailing economic conditions.

In the third workshop, more than 50 CSOs from each of Lebanon's five governorates, discussed how the SDGs were integrated in their day-to-day operations, the difficulties they face, and the possibilities to coordinate their work to implement a national SDGs process. Since the workshop, the civil society representatives on the national committee have organised wider consultations across the country to prepare their input into the VNR.

The national committee held its first meeting in March 2018, under the leadership of the prime minister and with the participation of the deputy prime minister. During this meeting, four thematic groupings for four of the 5Ps (People; Planet; Prosperity; Peace, justice and strong institutions) were created; and the fifth 'P' for Partnership was considered a cross-cutting issue in implementing and achieving the SDGs. These are consistent with the pillars of Agenda 2030 to ensure an integrated approach to each group of goals. A task force for statistics was formed (led by the CAS) to collect SDG-related data and statistics (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Structure of Lebanon's SDGs National Committee



A legislative institutional mechanism has also been set up to monitor the SDGs within the Parliament to advance the goals in the assembly. The parliamentary sub-committee is mapping existing legislation to all SDGs to identify and fill any gaps.

The CSO representatives in the national committee conducted a series of national consultations on the VNR with over 300 representatives of civil society organizations across Lebanon. Their main objectives were to raise awareness on the SDGs and Agenda 2030 among the civil society, to draft a civil society contribution to the VNR, and to define an inclusive follow up process for the civil society actors to engage in the implementation of Agenda 2030, monitor the progress of the SDGs, and provide support to the national committee through their two representatives in it.

Work on SDGs ownership in Lebanon goes beyond the above-mentioned formal institutional set-up. Lebanon's leading academic institutions have also demonstrated their ownership of Agenda 2030. The Lebanese University's Institute of Social Sciences, with support from UNFPA, has engaged in technical and substantive discussions on the SDGs. It is currently preparing a report on gender targets and adapting them to the Lebanese context. A number of research centres at the AUB are also advocating for Agenda 2030. For example, the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business at AUB hosts the GCNL that provides opportunities for learning, policy dialogue and partnership on SDGs in Lebanon among the private sector and other non-governmental stakeholders. The CNRS-L, a public institution, is responsible for science policymaking under the authority of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and has administrative and financial autonomy. The CNRS-L's main objective is to encourage scientific research, human resource development and dissemination of scientific knowledge that supports the government's scientific policies. In January 2018 the CNRS-L established a committee, of researchers in various domains, to follow up how work towards achieving SDGs is being implemented by the CNRS-L and government institutes.

The SDGs focal point at the PCM actively participated in workshops conducted by UNDESA for countries preparing 2018 VNRs, and in the 'Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement for the Implementation and Review of SDGs and Agenda 2030' e-course (jointly conducted by UNDESA and UNITAR) to enhance Lebanon's skills to prepare the VNR and implement Agenda 2030, while taking an inclusive and participatory approach to deepen national ownership.

IV Incorporating SDGs into National Frameworks

The political and security conditions during the past decade have constrained national policymaking. In 2017 the government ratified a budget—the first one in twelve years. The forward-looking Capital Investment Program, together with the government's Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment, (presented to the international community during the CEDRE conference) and its underlying projects, reflect the start of a new stage that should support the country's economic development goals and move it towards sustainable development.

Lebanon's sector strategies and plans incorporate some of the SDGs without necessarily naming them (Table 1). The creation of the national committee and process of writing this VNR have further focused ministries' attention on the importance of integrating SDGs and Agenda 2030 principles into their planning. A few ministries, such as public health and industry, have already made headway along these lines.

However, most strategies and plans need to be adapted to the level of SDG targets, which are more specific and measurable, and to reflect the connections between social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development. While inter-sectoral coordination takes place on specific subjects, Lebanon does not yet have an overarching framework on sustainable development that integrates the different dimensions of development, which Agenda 2030 calls for.

Lebanon's most comprehensive cross-sectoral development policy, which to a certain extent does integrate the three dimensions, is the NPMPLT. In 2002 the Government of Lebanon mandated the CDR to prepare the NPMPLT. It was finalised in 2005 and endorsed in 2009.

The NPMPLT is an integrated vision based on the following criteria: country unity, balanced development, and rationalised resource use. It provides a spatial and socioeconomic development plan by assessing Lebanon's potential assets, sub-national comparative advantages, and the country's world position over the coming decades. The NPMPLT's main focus is natural resource management and protection. The implementation arrangements for NPMPLT were partially prepared, with some aspects of the plan downscaled so they could be implemented. The plan as a comprehensive strategy did not materialise—although parts of it are being implemented. And the CDR is currently planning to update its related national geographical information system[2]. The recently launched Capital Investment Programme (presented by Lebanon to the CEDRE conference in Paris on 6 April 2018) has been developed from the NPMPLT.

More recent sector strategies and plans have increasingly incorporated the environmental dimension as a result of global momentum in that direction after Rio+20, and after national legislation on environmental protection was ratified. Examples include the current agriculture strategy that addresses many SDGs (Table 1), the industry strategy, and some of the urban or land management strategies.[3]

The social dimension has also gained attention in policymaking and in economic and political discourse, especially after the Social Action Plan that was produced in 2007 for Paris III, an international donors' conference to support Lebanon. At the time, the Social Action Plan marked a turning point in putting elements of a social policy back on the agenda and connecting it to economic reform. The plan was partially implemented.

Overall, the extent to which SDGs have been integrated into planning strategies remains broad. Integrated planning is more visible for some goals under each pillar of Agenda 2030, rather than between the economic, social and environment pillars. Institutional challenges and limited human and financial resources reduce the capacity of public institutions to ensure all three pillars are balanced during implementation.[4] The formation of the national committee should support more integrated planning in the future.

Table 1: Key National Strategies and Alignment with SDGs

Document	Date	SDG1 No Poverty	SDG2 Zero Hunger	SDG3 Good Health & Wellbeing	SDG4 Quality Education	SDG5 Gender Equality	SDG6 Clean Water & Sanitation	SDG7 Affordable & Clean Energy	SDG8 Decent Work & Economic Growth	SDG9 Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure	SDG10 Reduced Inequality	SDG11 Sustainable Cities & Communities	SDG12 Responsible Consumption & Production	SDG13 Climate Action	SDG14 Life Below Water	SDG15 Life on Land	SDG16 Peace & Justice Strong Institutions	SDG17 Partner-ships to achieve the Goal
National Physical Master Plan of Lebanon	2005	X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
National Water Sector Strategy (NWSS)	2010						X					X						
National e Strategy	2011																X	X
National Poverty Targeting Programme	2011	X	X	X														
National Social Development Strategy	2011	X	X	X	X	X												
Strategy for the Reform and Development of the Public Administration in Lebanon	2011																X	X
Marine Protected Areas Strategy	2012														X	X		
National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011–2021	2012				X	X					X							
Youth Policy in Lebanon	2012			X	X	X			X		X						X	
Ministry of Agriculture Strategy 2015–2019	2014	X	X			X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X		
National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme (NARP)	2014												X	X		X		
Rural Tourism Strategy for Lebanon	2014	X							X				X					
National Air Quality Management Strategy	2015			X				X				X	X					

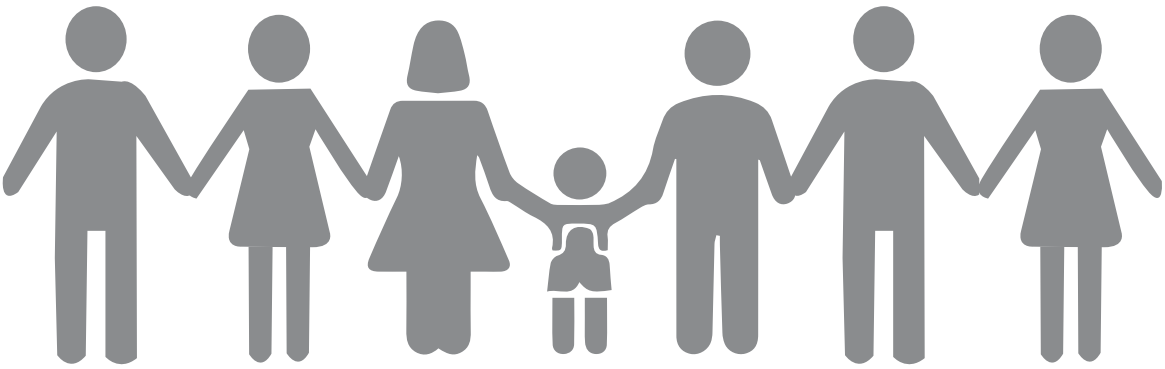
Lebanon National Forest Programmes 2015–2025	2015														X		X		
Health 2025	2016	X		X								X	X						
National Biodiversity Strategy	2016													X	X		X		
National Energy Efficiency Action Plan for Lebanon 2011–2015	2016							X					X	X	X				
Reaching All Children with Education (RACE 2) 2017–2021	2016	X			X	X													
Lebanon Conflict Response Programme	2016	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X				X	X
Ministry of Industry Strategic Plan 2016–2020	2016							X	X	X			X	X	X				
National Renewable Energy Action Plan for the Republic of Lebanon 2016–2020	2016							X					X	X	X				
Emergency Electricity Policy	2017							X											
Solid Waste Management Policy Brief	2017													X					
National Strategy for Gender Equality 2017–2030	2018				X	X						X							
Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment	2018								X	X								X	
National Programme for Decent Work 2017–2022	In process	X			X				X										

V Progress and Status of the 17 SDGs in Lebanon

"People" (SDG 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10)

Lebanon's main strength remains its human capital. Good healthcare and quality education are the foundation of this small country, evidenced by robust education and health systems. However, years of stresses have weakened the social system. Poverty rates, high before the Syrian crisis, have worsened, particularly in host communities that were already vulnerable and where displaced Syrians have settled. This has not stopped Lebanon's efforts to create a better environment for all by targeting the poorest through the NPTP and devising RACE2 that is intended to provide education for all, including displaced people. RACE 2's objective is to maintain high literacy and enrolment rates at all levels of education, and to improve the quality of education.

Lebanon's health system has undergone many positive developments despite massive external shocks: the quality and coverage of health services are improving as is the control and prevention of disease outbreaks. Women are at the core of this government's policies as evidenced by the first ever nomination of a minister of state for women's affairs. While there is gender parity in education, women's participation in the political and economic spheres are low but improving: the number of female candidates for the May 2018 parliamentary elections was higher than in the past and six women candidates made it to parliament. Nevertheless, the ability for a woman to pass her nationality remains a challenge, as well as the need to reduce social inequalities, particularly at the regional level.



1 NO POVERTY

SDG 1
No Poverty

Poverty in Lebanon was estimated to be around 27 percent[5] of the population in 2011/2012, nearly unchanged from 2004/2005[6] when extreme poverty was estimated to be 10 percent of the population. A labour force survey to measure living conditions is currently taking place.[7] Poverty is prevalent and acute amongst agricultural households in rural areas. Informality in employment and poverty are highly connected in Lebanon.[8]

Public sector employees have access to various social protection programmes such as maternity leave, health cover, private education, and end of service indemnity schemes that offer a choice between a lump sum after retirement or a monthly pension—and sometimes both. Private sector employees have acces to the NSSF. Most of the NSSF's protection schemes offer maternity and health cover and a lump sum end-of-service indemnity on retirement. The elderly and non-public sector retirees, the disabled, the unemployed and blue-collar self-employed benefit from medical services cover provided by the MoPH, or they receive social assistance under MoSA's programmes.

The MoSA launched the NPTP in 2011, using a targeting mechanism to deliver social assistance and. It targets social service provision to the extreme poor, based on a USD5.70 per day poverty line. It currently supports 43,000 families.[9] The NPTP's benefits consist of:

1. comprehensive health cover for beneficiaries in public and private hospitals by waiving the 10–15 percent co-payment for hospitalisation.
2. registration, fee waivers and free books for students in secondary and vocational public schools (primary public school fees were waived for everyone after the Syrian refugee influx).
3. food assistance via the electronic card food voucher programme. Food assistance was introduced in November 2014 to help mitigate the impact of the refugee influx on poor Lebanese.

The MoSA is currently scaling up the NPTP. It plans to increase provision of the e-card food voucher fromthe current 10,000 beneficiary households (57,000 individuals) to all 43,000 extreme poor households (245,600 individuals) over the next five years, and to expand the NPYP 'graduation' programme from 675 to 15,000 NPTP households over the same period. An estimated 9,000 households will have reached the graduation indicators meaning they are no longer being eligible for the e-card food voucher.

The MoSA has a network of 230 SDCs nationwide that are responsible for local development planning and implementing local development programmes. Other measures being used to target poverty alleviation in Lebanon and increase household income include universal subsidies on bread and electricity prices and exemptions provided under the value-added tax. These measures cover around 50 percent of low–income–families' consumption baskets. Some subsidies and exemptions also aim to stimulate job creation.

Social assistance by relevant ministries, NGOs and charities, is available to most people in informal employment. The MoPH's health services, especially for those without formal employment contracts, is also considered a key component of protection.

MoSA is currently preparing a participatory study on social protection to improve its provision by a well-identified formal and unified system. Many social services are already available and the disabled also receive assistance and medical coverage through MoPH and MoSA.

2 ZERO HUNGER

SDG 2
Zero Hunger

Lebanon does not have severe or chronic nutritional imbalances. The percentage of the population suffering from undernourishment[10] was 5.4 percent in 2015, almost the same as a decade ago. Around 11 percent of Lebanese households are vulnerable to food insecurity. These are mainly in rural regions where the majority of displaced Syrians have settled. More food-insecure households are headed by women than men. The MoSA runs programmes that address hunger and household nutrition, such as providing a free hot meal to the elderly and poor once a week through existing charities, and food vouchers provided by the NPTP.

Food availability in Lebanon is relatively secure and stable. The government's social assistance, sector strategies, and humanitarian organisations' programmes are working to further improve food security and sustainable agriculture. However, access to food by many poor households is restricted by its affordability. Lebanon imports 65 to 80 percent of its food, particularly staples like cereals and sugar. This makes it vulnerable to international food price shocks, which the government tries to offset by subsidising wheat and bread.[11]

In 2011 the agricultural sector constituted four percent of Lebanon's GDP and in 2009 employed six percent of the total labour force. Agriculture is the primary source of income and employment in rural areas, where the sector employs up to 25 percent of the labour force and makes up 80 percent of GDP in rural areas.

The Ministry of Agriculture 2015–2019 Strategy is based on principles of good governance. It aims to develop the agriculture sector by ensuring food security and food safety, reducing poverty and rural–urban migration, creating job opportunities, and increasing efficiency and sustainable use of natural resources. Its specific objectives are:

1. to provide safe and good quality food.
2. to improve the contribution of agriculture to the economic and social development of the country by raising agriculture's share of GDP from four to six percent and reducing the current agriculture trade deficit.
3. to promote the sustainable management of natural and genetic resources.

This is being implemented through eight courses of action, 30 components, and 104 area interventions.

The ministry's strategic objectives are supported by other initiatives, such as the IDAL Agri-Plus programme that provides agricultural export subsidies to local producers and other incentives to enhance product quality and improve packaging, promotion and marketing. The Central Bank of Lebanon also subsidises medium- and long-term agricultural loans and provides microfinance to enterprises with up to four workers.[12] In addition the Ministry of Economy and Trade subsidises wheat and controls bread price and the Ministry of Finance subsidises farmers planting tobacco.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

SDG 3
Good Health

Lebanon has consistently improved its health system and registered relatively favourable indicators, despite internal challenges and external shocks. The MoPH has developed and implemented plans, aimed at reaching the SDGs, which build on past successes. Lebanon is controlling and preventing disease outbreaks and ensuring universal access to healthcare services. The quality and coverage of health services have been improving. The number of women who die while giving birth has reduced from 14 per 100,000 (2015) to 8.7 per 100,000 (2017). Neonatal mortality rates are also very low at 4.3 per 1,000 (2017). More than 95 percent of births are attended by a skilled healthcare professional (Figure 2).

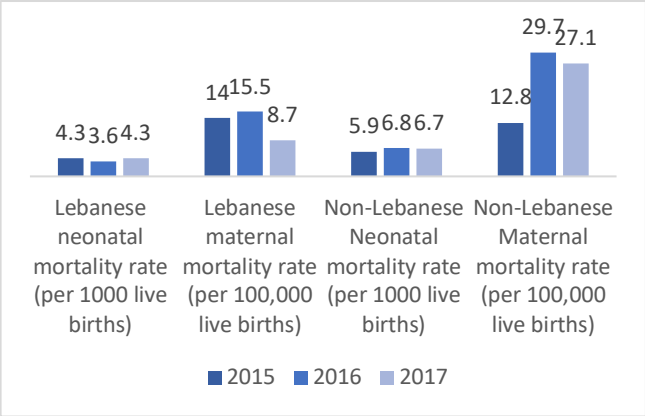


Figure 2: Key SDG Target 3.1 and 3.2 indicators

Source: Ministry of Public Health

Reproductive health services are accessible to nearly all Lebanese through a network of 213 primary healthcare centres run by the MoPH. Teenage pregnancy is not a critical issue in Lebanon.

Outbreaks of tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis and AIDS are well contained in Lebanon, if not non-existent. Malaria and other tropical diseases are not relevant in Lebanon. The tuberculosis burden is low: incidence is estimated at 16 per 100,000, prevalence is estimated at 20 per 100,000, and the mortality rate is estimated at 1 per 100,000. Tuberculosis comes from exposure to different populations through migration. Around half of the reported tuberculosis cases over the last three years have involved non-nationals, including displaced Syrians. The completion of tuberculosis treatment by Lebanese citizens is estimated to be 90 percent but only 50 percent for non-Lebanese. This is because non-Lebanese tend to leave the country before they end their treatment.[13]

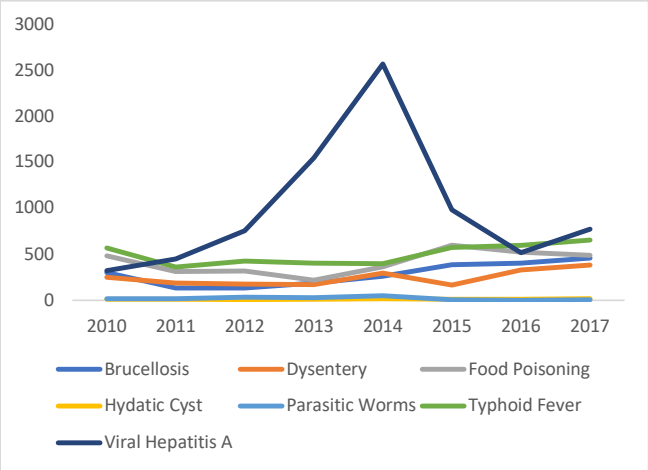


Figure 3: Key food and waterborne diseases reported cases by year

Source: Ministry of Public Health

The latest available data shows there were 108 new cases of HIV/AIDS in 2016 compared with 113 in 2015. The HIV/AIDS incidence stands at 2.47 per 100,000. While this rate seems higher than that of other Arab countries, it is mainly because of greater awareness and openess about the subject that has led to higher reporting in Lebanon.[14]

Food and waterborne diseases remain a challenge in Lebanon. Food safety legislation was introduced in 2015, focusing on risk analysis. However, food safety legislation is not well enforced by the various concerned ministries.

Issuing food safety legislation

In 2015 Lebanon ratified a food safety law. The law is consistent with the agriculture strategy and SDG targets 1.3 and 2.1. The law aims to set the overall governance structure of the food safety sector under the auspices of a public multi-stakeholder entity—the Food Safety Lebanese Commission. The law covers all types of food, beverages and processed foods. It sets requirements for food safety from farms, food transport and display, through to tracking and recordkeeping. As soon as the law was issued it was publicised by an awareness-raising campaign that influenced food producers and consumers. Members of the commission are still to be appointed.

After an upwards trend that reached its peak in 2007, the number of road deaths and injuries in Lebanon have been declining steadily due to regular awareness campaigns (Figure 4).

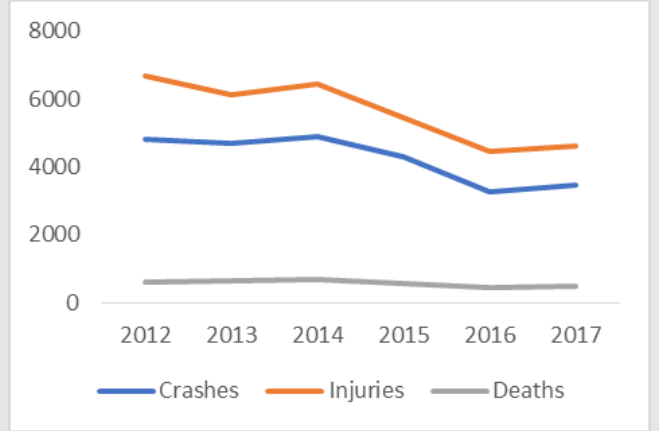


Figure 4: Crash, injuries and death rates due to car accidents) indicator 3.6.1)
Source: Ministry of Public Health

Lebanon relies on various health services, multiple delivery channels and funding sources, to achieve universal health coverage.[15] The NSSF covers around one-third of the population and other funds are available to public sector employees (such as the civil servants' cooperative) and to those in national military and security forces. Many Lebanese also rely on private health insurance, which provides financial cover with variable levels of patient co-pay. The MoPH covers primary care and hospitalisation at public and private institutions for everyone else, which amounts to around half the population. This system has proved resilient to shocks and ensured that every citizen has some form of health insurance cover (indicator 3.8.2).[16]

The MoPH has a network of 213 primary healthcare centres across the country, which provide services in collaboration with non-governmental organisations, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and municipalities, patients can see medical specialists at a reduced cost and receive basic and chronic disease medicationand vaccines free Critical diseases such as cancer, multiple sclerosis and others are fully

Integrating SDG targets

MOPH has integrated SDG targets in its plans and strategies. It has also set the baseline statistics for almost every indicator of the SDGs, and is in process of setting its own specific indicator targets. MOPH has already drawn up a planning framework and is implementing a series of programs covering the main health topics under the SDGs. Examples range from the primary healthcare centres and reproductive health programs to work underway on the Mental Health 2015-2021 strategy, the Non-Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control Plan Lebanon 2016-2020, the National Tuberculosis Programme - 2017, the Inter-Ministerial Substance Use Response Strategy for Lebanon 2016-2021 and others.

covered by MoPH. More than 36 percent of these centres are accredited internationally.[17] Almost 160,000 Lebanese used the primary healthcare centres in 2017, up 88 percent from 2015.[18] Displaced Syrians also access the centres.

The public health system continues to face a number of challenges, including financial constraints, understaffing (specifically an imbalance between medical doctors and nurses, paramedics, and administrative staff), a focus on tertiary care and poorly regulated ambulatory care. Despite these hurdles, Lebanon is committed to moving towards universal health coverage in line with the global engagement.[19]

The commitment towards universal healthcare falls under MoPH's Strategy 2025 that it launched in 2017. The strategy's central goal is universal health coverage and it is based on the principle of 'health as the right of each citizen'. Its strategic goals are:

1. to modernise and strengthen MoPH's executive and related administrations.
2. to improve collective public health through prevention and promotion throughout the life cycle of each individual, and in all stages/phases of life.
3. to make concrete steps towards universal coverage of high quality, safe and affordable healthcare that prioritises the poor and vulnerable.
4. to strengthen capacity and systems for timely, accurate and reliable epidemiological surveillance intelligence for public health security and emergency preparedness and response.

SDG 3 good practice: Reducing out-of-pocket health spending

The MoPH has been able to cut out-of-pocket spending by half, which has alleviated a heavy burden on a large proportion of the Lebanese population. MoPH managed four challenges: improving the quality of health services; containing the cost of healthcare and reducing its financial burden on households; reorienting health services towards promotion and prevention, and ensuring universal access to primary healthcare; and reducing the price and improving the quality of pharmaceuticals. MoPH spent the last decade revamping the public sector's primary health care network and upgrading the quality of public hospitals. This included providing vaccines and essential drugs free of charge, setting quality standards and clinical protocols, and ensuring a sufficient number of staff were trained. MoPH also pushed for a rational use of medical technologies and medicines, and increased the use of quality-assured generic medicines. It strengthened its leadership and governance functions through accreditation systems for primary healthcare centers and hospitals, and used 'performance contracting' with private and public hospitals for in-patient services at specified prices to ensure hospital compliance. These combined and targeted measures resulted in increasing access to quasi-free primary health services and essential medicines, shifted the focus from costly curative care to preventive care, and widened access to quality pharmaceutical products at lower prices. As a result, the proportion of households' out-of-pocket spending on health services fell from 60 percent in 1998 to 32 percent in 2015, while public health indicators also drastically improved.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

SDG 4
Quality Education

The Government of Lebanon is developing its Education 2030 SDG 4 Strategy that will set out its vision, goal and targets, contextualised to Lebanon's environment. The strategy will take the form of a roadmap for transforming the performance of the education system for the years 2019 to 2030, which will focus on continuous improvement of students' learning outcomes and skills. The strategy will have a clear focus on equity: ensuring every child, regardless of background or special educational needs, reaches his or her full educational potential.

The Education 2030 Strategy will be launched by the end of 2018 and will contain:

- a clear, prioritised set of policy developments that will be needed to deliver on the strategic goal and targets. These will include legal changes, financing requirements and models, and a prescription for technical work needed at school, governorate and ministry levels.
- an approach to changing the culture of short-term humanitarian aid that has characterised the response to the Syria crisis, towards developing long-term partnerships that benefit the Lebanese system for all students.
- a plan for improving equity and inclusion in the education system to benefit the poorest and most vulnerable children in Lebanon.
- a roadmap for aligning teaching and learning, in schools, colleges and universities, with developing the skills needed by the Lebanese economy in the 21st century.

In spite of the influx of displaced Syrians and underlying challenges to the education system, some improvements in education access and quality have been made since Agenda 2030 was established in 2015. MEHE now intends to use SDG4 to align its existing partnerships and international investments. As the education system transitions from emergency response to meeting the development challenges of a protracted crisis, MEHE will work with partners to shift from short-term humanitarian aid towards sustained partnerships in education that are in the interests of holistic development of the education system for all children. To achieve this, officials are working with a broad range of national and international stakeholders to secure predictable multi-year funding aligned to MEHE's emerging annual planning process for each school year.

Predictable multi-year funding will enable MEHE to make immediate improvements to school infrastructure and classroom teaching, alongside well-sequenced education reforms to raise learning levels and the performance of the national education system over the long term. Planned work includes improving access to formal and non-formal education from kindergarten to the end of mandatory basic education; a new interactive curriculum; continuous improvement of teacher performance; strengthening exam scores and the quality of the examination system; investing in data and research to inform policy; and ensuring all partners work behind unified frameworks endorsed by the government.

Lebanon has a very high literacy rate. The rate amongst Lebanese youth of both sexes is particularly high at 99.2 percent.[20] The gender parity index shows that girls and boys have equal opportunities at all levels of schooling.[21] However, gross enrolment rates for Lebanese students are unequal at all levels of education. Pre-primary enrolment hovers around 80

percent.[22] MEHE is currently reviewing the legal framework for the age of compulsory education so that it includes pre-primary cycle. Basic education is compulsory and free in public schools, which results in a higher enrolment rate at 90 percent. The rate is 70 percent for secondary education,[23] which could be partly attributed to young people leaving school for work,[24] and partly to their enrolment in technical and vocational institutions instead of secondary schools.

Table 2: Latest available data for SDG 4 indicators

Indicator	Latest available value	Latest available year
4.5.1 Gender parity index, primary	0.91	2015
4.5.1 Gender parity index, secondary	0.99	2015
4.5.1 Gender parity index, tertiary	1.16	2014
4.6.1 Literacy rate, percentage of females age 15+, adult female	88.09	2009
4.6.1 Literacy rate, percentage of males age 15+, adult male	94.27	2009
4.6.1 Literacy rate, adult, percentage of population age 15+	91.18	2009
4.6.1 Literacy rate, percentage of females age 15–24, youth female	99.34	2009
4.6.1 Literacy rate, percentage of males age 15–24, youth male	99.16	2009
4.6.1 Literacy rate, percentage of population age 15–24, youth	99.24	2009

Source: Arab Development Portal 2018[25]

MEHE launched the Education Sector Development Plan 2010–2015 to address major issues in the sector. However, within a year, the Syria crisis obliged the government to prioritise a humanitarian response.[26] With the support of the international community, since 2011 public schools have opened their doors to all refugee children seeking enrolment. This has doubled the number of students and put additional strain on the infrastructure of public schools, which, in many cases, already needed rehabilitation. Many challenges to achieving 'inclusive and equitable quality education' have been considered in the RACE 2 Strategy for 2017–2021.

Against this difficult backdrop, MEHE has continued to work on quality and inclusion as far as possible. Equity and inclusion are now MEHE's two main strategic goals that itwill work on while shifting from short-term development to offering all children in Lebanon the kind of education envisaged in SDG 4 by 2030.

To facilitate school enrolment and provide services to students who have learning, physical and sensory disabilities, MEHE is implementing several initiatives with different education partners. MEHE is currently piloting inclusion in 30 public schools and equipping 100 public schools with resource rooms to support students with learning disabilities.[27]

The Ministry has also developed a child protection policy with the MoSA, the Ministry of Justice, UNICEF, and other relevant entities. The policy includes a comprehensive methodology for early identification and referral of cases of violence.

MEHE is increasingly prioritising work that will strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy in early grades so that children enter grade 4 with the skills they need to succeed in later stages of

their academic career. Equally importantly, this early grades focus enables the poorest and most vulnerable children to get a good start to their education, as they are the students most likely to drop out early without qualifications. This ambition is the core of MEHE's current year's plan for the World Bank funded S2R2 programme.

SDG 4 Good Practice: Increasing inclusion in public education

Under the inclusive education pilot, a cluster of schools will be formed for each governorate in Lebanon. MEHE will contract 30 special educators to include students with learning difficulties and motor difficulties in school activities. Each cluster will have one mobile team of different paraprofessionals (psychologist, psychomotor therapist and speech therapist). The objective of the pilot is to: (i) operationalise and test the model of inclusive education in Lebanon; (ii) build the capacity of the public school system to provide quality education for all children;(iii) generate evidence on successful inclusion practices, and positively influence public and professional opinion on inclusion; (iv) assess and provide recommendations for the scale-up of inclusive education model in the public school system; and (v) inform policy development on inclusive education to ensure high quality education for all children.

One of S2R2's initiatives is building capacity in school-based management. MEHE is in the process of institutionalising school improvement plans (SIP) that involve students, teachers and parents in assessing the school and developing an improvement plan. Another initiative is developing a strategy for investing in school construction, rehabilitation and maintenance. MEHE will also focus on successfully transitioning pilot projects into mainstream policy and planning.

MEHE will launch the Lebanon Education 2030 SDG 4 Strategy at the end of 2018. The Ministry's current work is already being directed towards meeting the SDG 4 targets, with the aim of offering quality education for all.

Lebanon's Youth Policy

Lebanon's Youth Policy, endorsed in 2012, was formulated using a bottom-up participatory approach. It addresses migration, labour and economic participation, education and culture, health, social integration, and political participation by youth. A wide range of relevant actors including youth-centred NGOs and youth organisations of political parties worked on the policy. Currently, the Ministry of Youth and Sport, with the support of UN agencies, is designing an action plan to implement the policy. In addition to addressing SDG4 targets, the action plan is expected to establish interlinkages amongst the SDGs to deal with the youth issues.

In the first half of 2018 the MEHE launched the National Strategic Framework for TVET 2018–2022. This strategic framework is the culmination of year-long consultations led by the Government of Lebanon, with the support of UNICEF and the ILO. These consultations involved many stakeholders including MEHE, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Agriculture, the MoSA, the National Employment Office, the National Vocational Training Centre, private sector representatives and NGOs.

Throughout 2017, six working groups established their own strategic goals and priorities for reforming the TVET sector. The working groups identified three main deficitsin Lebanon's TVET system: (i) access and service delivery; (ii) quality and relevance; and (iii) governance and systems. The TVET strategic framework presents a common roadmap to address these deficits.

The strategic framework confirms the Government of Lebanon's renewed commitment to promote a TVET system that provides youth and workers with the competencies and skills they need to access decent work, and allows businesses to recruit the workforce they need for growth. This commitment is articulated in the strategic framework's three main strategic axes: (i) expanded access; (ii) enhanced quality and relevance of TVET provision; and (iii) improved TVET governance.

In line with the SDGs, the TVET strategic framework prioritises equitable access to TVET for

all, with a focus on 'leaving no one behind'. Lifelong learning and life skills are prioritised so workers can adapt to a changing labour market, and become more active citizens.

The strategic framework forms the basis for improved collaboration across government institutions, and stronger partnerships with the private sector. It serves as the main national reference for institution-specific action plans that will include strong partnerships with employers' and workers' organisations. Specific performance indicators and targets are being included in each action plan to monitor progress.

The CNRS-L plays a vital role in mainstreaming the quality of education at the national policy level, and within the teaching and research institutes in Lebanon and the region. It runs three related programmes.

1. The Lebanese baccalaureate scholarship. A full scholarship is given to the top five winners in the four baccalaureate branches to enrol in private or public Lebanese universities to complete their undergraduate studies in any field. The total number of beneficiaries since 2002 is 272 students.

2. Award for excellence in scientific research. This is given to researchers for their innovative contribution to science and development in medical science and public health, human and social sciences, agriculture and environment, basic science and engineering. The prizes are pecuniary and in kind. 45 researchers have received this award since 2011.

3. Doctoral scholarship programme. This assists Lebanese students to pursue their higher studies and build research and academic capacities in all fields, especially those related to pressing societal challenges. The programme funding is joint with various Lebanese universities or joint with European universities and research institutes. 600 students, mostly from public Lebanese universities, have benefited from the programme in the last two decades. The programme's annual budget is USD2 million.

OMSAR supports lifelong learning by providing training programmes to public sector employees. It raises awareness about issues related to gender, human rights, the environment, alternative energy, waste separation and recycling.

Over the next five years, MEHE wishes to use the framework of Agenda 2030, and the Government of Lebanon's commitment to it, to align its multiple partnerships and international investments. There are several challenges for Lebanon to overcome to be able to offer all children the kind of education envisaged in Sustainable Development Goal 4 by 2030.

Financing and equitable use of resources remain key to advancing SDG 4 targets across the education sector in Lebanon. Challenges include increasing public funding for education, especially in marginalized communities. Additionally, it is necessary to move from short-term international aid to multi-year funding for aid effectiveness and harmonizing investment in the interests of the holistic development of the system for all children.

One challenge in the sector is the absence of intra-sectoral coordination and planning between the different stages and tracks in education, examples being coordination between schools and universities or general education and vocational training. The general education curriculum also needs revision to reflect competencies and skills relevant to the professional and future life of students.

Additionally, the existing legal framework for compulsory education does not include pre-primary education. The sector is also in need of system strengthening and better policies for the regularization of education providers.

To realize SDG 4, Lebanon should develop more inclusive policies and a coherent education system based on planning and alignment between curriculum, educational leadership, assessment, teacher preparation, and management.

5 GENDER EQUALITY

SDG 5
Gender Equality

Lebanon is a signatory to several international conventions, covenants and agreements that seek to protect and promote human rights and women's rights, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. In 2012 the government approved the NCLW's Strategy for Women's Affairs in Lebanon 2011–2021. This ten–year strategy has 12 strategic objectives that touch on all aspects of women's lives. The strategy's plan for 2017–2019 is being implemented and monitored through published annual reports.

According to WEF GGR in 2017, Lebanon ranked 109th in each of education and health with scores of 0.956 and 0.957 respectively. Equal opportunities are provided in education for both sexes, as proven by the gender parity index. Also the index averaged 0.932 for primary education enrolment, 1.00 for secondary education enrolment, and 1.00 for tertiary education enrolment for the same year. Lebanon ranks first on GGI with 64.9 percent and 45.7 percent females, compared with 64.75 percent and 39.5 percent males enrolled in secondary and tertiary education respectively. Literacy rates are 88.09 percent for females aged above 15 and 99.34 percent for females aged between 15 and 24.[28]

Establishing a joint roadmap for women's political participation in 2018

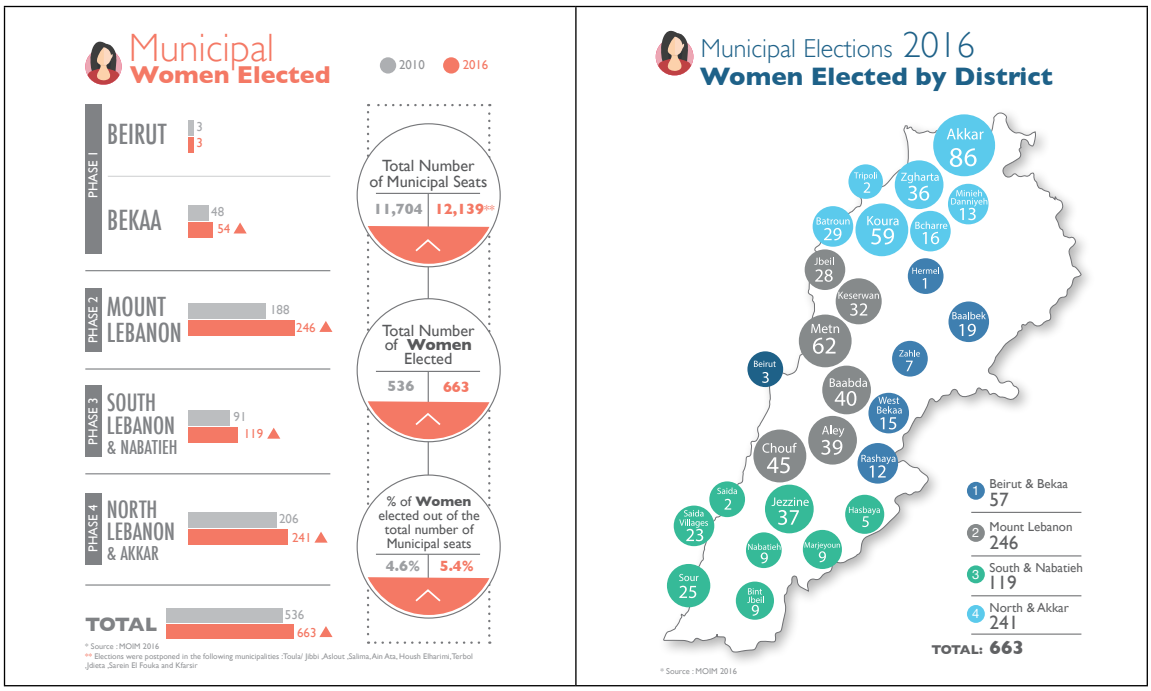
In preparatiosn for the 2018 Parliamentary elections, the UNDP Lebanese Elections Assistance Project - in partnership with the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, teh European Union, and UN Women – launched a gender roadmap form women's political particiaption and representation. Aiming to enhance the meaningful participation of women in the upcoming elections, the gender roadmap presents alternatives, other than quotas, to increase women's participation in politics and help in advocating and influencing public behaviour to support the inclusion of women in public life. The gender roadmap includes the developmetn and production of a public media awareness campaign that targets Lebanese women as candidates and voters following the electoral calendar timeline. It also entails organising informaiton sessions for potential women candidates, independens and party members, to enhance their capacity to manage their upcoming electoral campaigns.

Source: 365 days of a Gender Journey: Stories from UNDP. preparation for the 2018 Parliamentary elections, the UNDP Lebanese Elections Assistance

Women's participation in economic life is increasing: their labour force participation rate stands at 26.3 percent (WEF GGR 2017). In 2017, the minister of state for women's affairs requested the council of ministers to implement a women's qouta when appointing senior officials and board memebrs in public administrations. Women currently make up 27 percent of the newly appointed positions in the diplomatic corps, 30 percent of the Electoral Management Body, 23 percent of officials of national security positions, and 17 percent of the Social and Economic Council. Women constitute only 5.4 percent of local government. In October 2017 half (47.5 percent) of the justice sector were women. This is a marked increase from 15 percent in 1993. It is expected that 50.4% of judges will be female by November 2019, as more male judges reach retirement age and more women enter the sector. Female legislators with senior official and managerial positions account for eight percent, and in 2013 little more than four percent of firms had women top managers.[29] The public salary scale law ratified in 2017 (Law 46/2017) gives married women in the public sector the flexibility to work part-time, with a commensurate salary cut.[30]

Women are increasingly becoming involved in different aspects of political life. For the first time in Lebanon's history, the current cabinet includes a Minister of State for Women Affairs. Largely owing to strong advocacy campaigns, female candidates for the May 2018 Parliamentary elections made up 14.4 percent of total candidates—clear progress from the two percent registered in 2009. Women made up 62.34 percent of candidates on the lists, and six of these women candidates became members of Parliament. During the 2016 municipal elections the share of women elected to municipal councils reached around 5.6 percent across all geographical districts (Figure 5), compared to 4.6 percent in the previous round in 2010.

Figure 5: Women elected by district in the 2016 municipal elections



Source: UNDP[31]

On 4 August 2011 Parliament annulled article 562 of the penal code, which mitigated the sentence of people who claim they killed or injured their wife, daughter, or other relative to protect the family 'honour'.

In 2014 Parliament issued law 293 on domestic violence. It was followed by the amendment of a series of discriminatory laws to empower and protect women. In August 2017 Parliament abolished article 522 of the penal code that had allowed prosecution to drop charges against a rapist if he marries his victim. And in 2017, the Council of Ministers approved the first drafted law to criminilize sexual harrasement in public places and work places. It is in the Parliament awaiting final promulgation to be enacted.

The Council of Ministers approved a draft law to eliminate discrimination in the NSSF, and a draft law to grant paternity leave, to assure gender balance, in order to build a floor for economic empowerment of women.

Together NCLW and OMSWA are working on drafting the first national action plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. OMSAR funds projects that promote gender equality and advocate for women's issues such as protection and gender-based violence.

OMSWA in cooperation with the UN Gender Group, is drafting the first national strategy to combat violence against girls and women in the country and preparing a National study on the Economic cost of Violence Against Women with UNDP, UNFPA and ESCWA.

OMSWA drafted the strategy for the prevention of violence extremism from a gender perspective that was integrated in the PVE national strategy.

Lebanon's most challenging issue remains the personal status code which is bound to article 9 of the constitution and therefore under the authority of the different religious courts. This leads to discrimination between Lebanese women from different religions and impacts on many aspects of their legal, social and economic life.

Work towards amending the nationality law has seen some progress. The NCLW is preparing a revised draft of its previous law proposal submitted in 2010. Under the current law Lebanese women cannot pass on their nationality to their children, or husbands if they marry a foreign national. On 31 May 2010 the Council of Ministers, presided by PM Saad Hariri, granted some facilities including a temporary free residency permit for three years for the husbands and children of Lebanese women (decree 4186/2010).

SDG 5 Good practice: Repealing the 'Rape-marriage"marriage' law 522

In August 2017 Lebanon abolished the Penal Code Article 522 that exempted a rapist from punishment if he married his victim. This major legal step was a direct outcome of several national initiatives, the last of which was a nationwide advocacy campaign to remove existing discriminatory legal provisions related to Article 522 of the Lebanese Penal Code. The campaign mobilised public awareness of the need to strengthen legislation, protect women and girls from sexual violence and exploitation, and spur social norms to change to adequately respond to sexual violations. The prime minister, the minister of state for women's affairs and the NCLW, which had already worked on amending the law, all supported the campaign. The Parliamentary Committee for Administration and Justice agreed to repeal Article 522 of the Lebanese Penal Code and the Lebanese Parliament voted on the reform.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

SDG 10
Reduced Inequalities

Over the years, Lebanon has implemented a number of social, economic and political policy measures to correct imbalances; however, reducing inequalities remains a challenge.

Progress on Target 10.1 is difficult to measure because the latest official information on income inequality relies on a household budget survey conducted in 2007. The survey findings show that the bottom 20 percent of the population accounts for 7 per cent of total consumption levels, while the top 20 percent accounts for over 43 per cent. The corresponding Gini coefficient was estimated at 0.37 for Lebanon.

More recently, a study conducted in 2017 by the Ministry of Finance examined labour income distribution in Lebanon, using personal income tax declarations by the private sector, and showed that "private sector earnings are disproportionately distributed between income groups with the top 2 percent capturing a share of income almost as high as that of the bottom 60 percent. The calculated Gini coefficient places Lebanon at a rank of 129 from 141 countries in terms of income equality.

When considering "ensuring equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome" (SDG Target 10.3), the World Bank's inequality-adjusted 2015 human development index shows that Lebanon faces notable inequality of opportunities and outcomes among its citizens, particularly regarding income and education, and to a lesser extent health. The index loses 21 per cent because of losses mainly from income and education inequality compared to the values of the non-inequality-adjusted human development index)[32].

In terms of social, economic and political inclusion (Target 10.2), some progress in certain areas like gender is observed. Part of the challenge is due to weak opportunity and disparities in quality between public and private services – whether real or perceived – people tend to complement or completely substitute public services with private ones and this accentuates inequalities[33].

Economic exclusion is reflected in a high informality rate where the vast majority of the poor work under unfavourable working conditions with limited decent job opportunities creation. Geographical disparities in accessibility to services further compound economic and social forms of inequality.

Social protection policies in Lebanon are gaining attention and building up. Ministry of Public Health coverage of all those who do not have health insurance; the expansion a primary health network that offers consultations and medications almost for free; the network of grassroots and programs of SDCs and the sector-wide upgrading in public education – all aim to enhance social protection. Nevertheless, such measures need to be part of an integrated approach.

In terms of fiscal policy, Lebanon has a number of taxes that aim to address equity concerns. Personal income tax legislation allows generous deductions and the structure of the tax is progressive and low-income brackets are tax-exempt. The income tax offers tax credits (basic, family and child).

Taxes on built property and inheritance also have a very generous exemptions system; built property tax structure exempts up to USD 80,000 of property value, and inheritance tax exempts up to USD 42,000 of inheritance amount for direct relatives. More recently, the 2017 budget (the first to be passed in 12 years) included three measures to improve progressive taxation, namely raising the tax on interest income from interest from 5 to 7 per cent, raising the tax on

corporate income to 17 per cent, and adding a tax on income from real estate transactions of 15 per cent. On the spending side, nevertheless, fiscal policy is constrained by high deficit and debt levels.

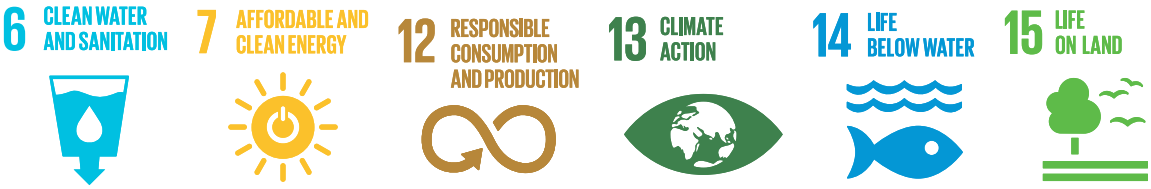
As for labour and wage policies, the Ministry of Labour, with the support of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), is currently drafting a five-year comprehensive strategy for the period 2017-2020 based on a tripartite consultation as per the ILO approach. The strategy aims to: (i) strengthen policy coherence with a focus on labour management and labour inspection systems; (ii) improve working conditions for all workers in accordance with Lebanese laws and regulations and in line with international labour standards; (iii) promote productive employment with a focus on the employment of Lebanese youth; (iv) improve social security contributions and provide a minimum level of social protection, focusing on vulnerable groups within society[34].

Today, Lebanon's wage policy consists of a minimum wage for the public and private sector set by the government, modified in 2017. In the public sector, employees receive a generous amount of allowances in addition to their basic salaries.

Finally, on the political front, the year 2017 saw an unprecedented achievement. Lebanon issued a new parliamentary election law that is based on proportional representation, replacing its historical majoritarian system. The law was implemented in 2018 for the first time and has attracted more than 1000 candidates running for parliament; out of which 111 were women.

V.II Planet (SDGs 6, 7, 12, 13, 14 and 15)

Lebanon has shown commitment to international environmental conventions and set out its agendas for natural resource management and protection. While numerous pieces of legislation have been ratified over the years, applying these laws and regulations remains a challenge. Environmental goals are often overlooked, or not prioritised, due to the overwhelming political, economic, social and security challenges facing the country such as the impact of the Syria crisis. Although progress has been made towards some SDG targets, progress towards others has fallen short as natural resource management and climate change are standalone pillars in Lebanon's overall economic development agenda, despite efforts to counter the challenges through initiatives by the public and private sectors, civil society and international orgnisations.



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

SDG 6
Clean Water and Sanitation

Lebanon has sufficient natural water resources but faces complex challenges due to uncontrolled consumption and increased pollution. The sudden increase in population due to the influx of approximately 1.5 million displaced Syrians[35] has put further strain on the system.

The Lebanese government is working on protecting and upgrading water resources, and on the completion, expansion and rehabilitation of the water and wastewater networks.

The national water distribution network provides almost full coverage of Lebanon and half of it was rehabilitated by 2017.[36]

Table 3: Key SDG 6 indicators

Indicator	Explanation	Result
Improved water sources	Improved water sources are those that have the potential to deliver safe water by nature of their design and construction.	99% (2015)
Piped improved sources		83% (2015)
Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services	Drinking water from an improved water source is located on premises, available when needed, and free from faecal and priority chemical contamination.	37% (2016)
Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services	Use of improved facilities that are not shared with other households and where excreta are safely disposed of in situ or transported and treated offsite.	20% (2015)

Source: United Nations Statistics Division and WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Programme

The government is doing work to protect and upgrade water resources, and to complete, expand and rehabilitate the water and wastewater networks.[37]

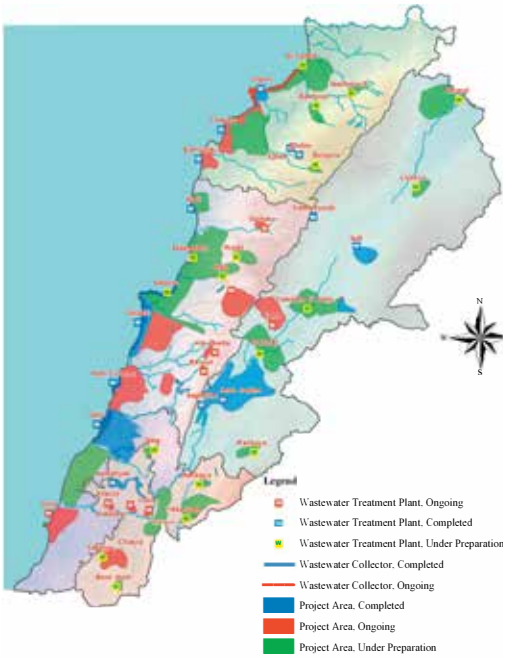
Despite this only 37 percent of the population have access to safe drinking water[38] [39] (Table 3). This is part due to deficiencies in water supply and contamination across the transmission networks, but also because of pollution at the source and unsustainable water extraction practices and uses.[40] Untreated municipal wastewater, and some industrial and agricultural waste, is often discharged into valleys, rivers and the sea.

Given that the water supply is not continuous, especially during the summer, households rely on private water suppliers (water trucking) or artesian wells. The wells are often established illegally to meet household water needs. For drinking, medium- and high-income households resort to purchasing bottled water, while low-income households use unsafe sources, which can lead to health problems that affect children and other vulnerable groups.[41]

Figure 6: Projects for wastewater treatment as of October 2016

Wastewater

Completed, Ongoing & Under Preparation Projects



In response to these challenges, Cabinet approved the National Water Sector Strategy in 2012. This aims to 'ensure water supply, irrigation and sanitation services throughout Lebanon on a continuous basis and at optimal service levels, with a commitment to environmental, economic and social sustainability.' It calls for increased coverage of wastewater collection networks and treatment capacities; resolved transmission and distribution problems; infrastructure for surface water storage and recharging groundwater. On the demand side, the strategy includes installing metering and volumetric charging. In April 2018, the Water Code was passed by the Lebanese Parliament. This legislation applies international agreements on water, promotes integrated water resource management and provides for delegated management to the private sector. The decrees and decisions pertaining to this law still need to be passed before it can be applied.

The wastewater network does not fully cover the country and there are regional differences. While coverage is around 80 percent in Beirut, it is less than 50 percent in the Bekaa.[42] Nationwide, access to safe sanitation services is no more than 20 percent. This is due to the institutional and financial challenges facing the operation and maintenance of the existing wastewater networks and treatment plants, which have been exacerbated by the impact of displaced Syrians.[43] This has increased the demand for water by eight to twelve percent and increased the national wastewater generation rate by of eight to fourteen percent.[44]

The Government of Lebanon has tried to address this issue by completing the wastewater networks and treatment plants (Figure 6) planned in the NWSS. Lebanon, as part of its climate change Paris Agreement commitments, has set municipal wastewater treatment targets of 51 percent (unconditional) and 70 (conditional) of municipal wastewater treatment by 2030. The Capital Investment Plan, presented to the international community during the CEDRE conference in April 2018, includes completing ongoing projects, expanding existing plans and upgrading them for secondary treatment, rehabilitating collection networks in selected areas, and completing small-scale works at the municipal level.[45] This plan also aims to provide additional surface water sources consistent with the NWSS's projects. OMSAR funds water purification projects for Al-Assi and the protection of marine life from pollution.

The CNRS-L, through the National Center for Remote Sensing, has been implementing several national and international projects (funded by the GEF, WB, EU, Italian Cooperation and others) to integrate water resource management and protect and restore water-related ecosystems. It has evaluated the pollution of water resources in the country and has been monitoring the pollution in the Litani basin and the Qaaroun reservoirs every month for the last seven years using satellite imagery and in situ measurements. In 2018, the CNRS-L established a SDG6 consortium, of 19 stakeholders representing 14 institutes, and released a report called 'Developing Institutional Capacity for Integrated Approach in SDG6 Monitoring in Lebanon'.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy

Thermal energy generation still predominates in Lebanon, but it is moving towards increasing its energy generation from renewable sources. Ensuring reliable and sustainable access to electricity to all remains a challenge for the country, notwithstanding managing energy's impact on pollution. In 2017 Lebanon also started planning offshore petroleum resources exploration.

Throughout the post-civil war years and until today, Lebanon has been unable to meet electricity demand. Its installed capacity is little more than 2000 megawatts, versus demand that can rise to 3000 megawatts, or more at peak times. Consequently, consumers experience power cuts ranging from three hours in Beirut to up to 12 hours per day elsewhere. Residents resort to paid diesel generators that are costly and pollute the environment. The government continues to provide a universal subsidy to the price of energy, thereby supporting all income brackets including the poorest. As a result, one of the largest items in the government's budget is the annual transfer to the national utility—EDL—to cover its deficit. This payment has been nearly USD2 billion a year since 2002.[46] The deterioration of facilities and poor maintenance practices has led to outdated generation technologies, a deficient transmission network and high technical losses. Institutional management problems, gaps in fee collection, and high vacancy rates in EDL exacerbate the problems.[47]

Law 462/2002[48] governs the electricity sector. Its main objective is to create an independent regulatory authority for electricity, unbundle Lebanon's power sector and ultimately privatise production and distribution, in the hope of resolving power shortages. The regulatory authority has not yet been established yet.[49]

In 2017 the Council of Ministers approved a five-year strategy for the electricity sector,[50] which builds on a previous plan made in 2010. The strategy aims to bridge the electricity generation supply-demand gap, resolve transmission and distribution problems to improve accessibility and reliability, and work on energy efficiency[51] and increasing the share of energy from renewable sources.[52]

Financing renewable energy and efficiency projects

The National Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Action (NEEREA) is a national platform launched on 25 November 2010. It is based on the Circular 236 of the Central Bank of Lebanon, which, in collaboration with the EU, lists the terms and conditions to get subsidised green loans. In 2013, as per Circulars 313, 318, and 346, BDL introduced new incentives to focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy and certified green buildings. By the end 2017, the NEEREA financing mechanism had approved more than 780 projects with a total value of more than US 464 million.

The technologies currently used for power generation are a major contributor to pollution. Emissions from electricity generation make up more than half of the total GHG emissions in the country.[53]

In 2013 the government issued a tender to build the first wind farms to diversify into renewable energy and in 2017 initiated tenders for the installation of solar power plants.[54]

Three companies were awarded licenses to generate electricity from wind in 2017, and, by the end of the same year, the government received more than forty bids to build solar plants.[55] Several renewable energy bids were launched, with an expected total cumulative renewable energy installation of 1,680 to 1,970 megawatts by 2025. Improvements to energy efficiency[56] started with Lebanon's first NEEAP (2011-2015). This raised awareness and secured financing mechanisms for the application of increased energy efficiency systems. The NEEAP was updated in 2016 and an NREAP was issued in 2016 for 2016–2020 that committed to develop renewable energy technologies to reach a 12 percent target by 2020, subject to developments in the electricity sector. The renewable energy generation is expected to come from wind, solar, hydro, and biomass.[57] OMSAR funds projects that introduce alternative energy into homes and schools in the Bekaa region. As part of the Paris Agreement commitments, Lebanon has set targets of 15 percent (unconditional) and 20 percent (conditional) for renewable energy, and three percent (unconditional) and 10 percent (conditional) for energy efficiency by 2030.

Recently Lebanon has started to license offshore hydrocarbon exploration. Under the 2010 offshore petroleum resources law, the Lebanese Petroleum Administration was established to advise Cabinet and Parliament. In 2017 the Cabinet issued decrees for the delineation of Lebanon's maritime borders, and the tendering and award process for hydrocarbon exploration. The bidding process was completed, and three companies in one consortium made offers on blocks four and nine in Lebanon's Exclusive Economic Zone (maritime) and were consequently awarded exploration and production rights. The exploration phase is expected to start upon the approval of the exploration plan and will last up to five years.[58]

Commercial findings should ultimately support the country's electricity generation plans and its shift away from the costly fuel-oil burning power plants that will reduce emissions and contribute to Lebanon's climate change action and its commitment to the Paris Agreement and the SDGs. The environmental assessment of oil exploration projects is ongoing.

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

SDG 12
Responsible Consumption and Production

Lebanon is party to multilateral environmental treaties, protocols and conventions, and national and sectoral legislation, policies and strategies have, to different degrees, incorporated sustainability principles. Nevertheless, there is still a need for a national sustainable development strategy and vision that connects these principles across sectors to cover all production and consumption patterns.

The environment protection law (444/2002), and a number of application decrees,[59] support the SCP concept by cleaner production techniques, biodiversity conservation, prevention of natural resource degradation, environmental monitoring (pollution sources and abatement systems) and setting landfill standards and promoting recycling.

The Ministries of Environment and Industry developed Lebanon's Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production for the Industrial Sector in 2015.[60] The action plan aims to:

1. adopt best available techniques to promote SCP in the industrial sector.
2. introduce SCP approaches, related to the industrial sector, in policy and institutional frameworks.
3. educate and raise awareness of consumers about SCP in the industrial sector.
4. decouple key economic development from environmental pressure.
5. improve quality of life and wellbeing.
6. address key economic and social challenges.
7. apply life cycle thinking. This considersthe impacts that occur during the life cycle of the consumption and production chain.

Other sector policies have increasingly incorporated elements of sustainability. Examples include the Ministry of Industry's integrated vision (Lebanon Industry 2025), executive strategy (2016–2020) and 2017 and 2018 operational plans. The executive strategy has seven operational objectives, including objective five, 'encourage green industry', which confirms the ministry's commitment to promote sound environmental management and SCP principles in the industrial sector: supporting recycling, certifying industrial establishments for environmental management; supporting the use of sustainable energy and disseminating the culture of energy efficiency and green manufacturing (through workshops, training programmes, economic studies and scientific research); using renewable and alternative energy and improving energy efficiency in industries; gradually enforcing the concept of green industry as a pre-requisite for permits; and collaborating with the Ministry of Environment to support environmental compliance of existing establishments.

The Ministry of Industry is also working on the organisation of existing industrial zones and constructing new and sustainable industrial zones in all Lebanese regions.

To assist the industrial sector with environmental compliance, in 2014 the Ministry of Environment (funded by the Italian government, the WB, the Central Bank and UNDP) launched the Lebanon Environmental Pollution Abatement Project. The project provides free technical assistance to industrial enterprises to evaluate their environmental status and propose actions to improve their overall environmental performance in line with the national regulations. The project also provides access to very soft loans to implement these actions

Solid waste management is a large, ongoing sector policy challenge.[61] Lebanon, party to international conventions on hazardous waste management,[62] [63] has issued a national healthcare waste management decree. This specifies the types of waste in healthcare facilities and holds each medical institution responsible for managing its waste. An estimated 60 percent of healthcare waste is treated,[64] while the rest (like industrial waste, demolition and other types of waste) is mixed with municipal waste.[65] The Syrian crisis has added to the challenging solid waste situation in Lebanon. An estimated 15.7 percent of additional solid waste is attributed to displaced populations, leading to existing solid waste management infrastructure being stressed, an increase in open dumping and open burning of waste, and increased contamination of land, surface and groundwater.[66]

Several strategies have been drafted over the last two decades to manage the municipal solid waste sector in Lebanon, but none were properly implemented for various reasons but primarily social acceptance and political factors.[67] In January 2018, the Council of Ministers approved an integrated solid waste management policy that sets material and energy recovery targets (25 percent and 35 percent respectively by 2024; 35 percent and 50 percent respectively by 2035), addresses dumps rehabilitation and promotes a decentralised approach to integrated solid waste management.[68] The Ministry of Environment is collecting information from municipalities on their waste management plans to prepare a comprehensive strategy. A draft national solid waste management law, setting out the governing structure of the sector, was submitted to Parliament in 2012 but has not yet been approved. Extensive initiatives are underway, across the public and private sectors and civil society, to reach the national recycling targets. In 2017 the rate of recycling,[69] was estimated at 15 percent.[70]

Such sustainability principles form part of other sectors' strategies and plans. One example is the Lebanese Petroleum Administration[71] that has also committed to 'a process of assessment and management that is ongoing', with the aim to balance environmental and social protection with the development of offshore energy resources.[72] This is a critical sector, new to Lebanon, that isstill in its early development stages. Another examle is Lebanon's 2015–2020 rural tourism strategy that is based on 'the cross cutting principles of sustainable tourism, heritage conservation, and community development'.

The Sustainable Public Procurement Action Plan, prepared in 2011,[73] was based on a review of the public procurement legal framework. It seeks to incorporate environmental and social sustainability criteria into Lebanese public procurement laws. Implementing the plan depends on changes to a number of laws.[74]

13 CLIMATE ACTION

SDG 13
Climate Action

Over the past two decades, Lebanon has actively worked on improving its capacity to adapt to and mitigate climate change.[75] The country has actively participated in the UNFCCC and in 2015 issued its intended nationally determined contribution (NDC)[76] and set the country's overall climate change strategy.

Lebanon's overall GHG emissions are minimal compared to other countries due to the country's size and relatively small industrial sector. However, trends show emissions doubled between 1994 and 2013, and increased annually by 3.7 percent. This increase is mainly driven by the transport and energy sectors (burning of fossil fuels) that together account for around 80 percent of emissions.[77]

Climate change is expected to have a negative impact on the country's agriculture, power generation, and water supply. Agriculture is the most vulnerable sector leading to a decrease in production. Power production and supply will also be under pressure, because of an increase in demand for air conditioning in the summer. [78]

Lebanon signed the Paris Agreement in April 2016, and, in August 2016, the Council of Ministers forwarded the draft law of the Paris Agreement to Parliament where it remains pending. Although Lebanon does not yet have dedicated national legislation to address climate change, several policies and pieces of legislation, such as those on energy efficiency, renewable energy and air pollution, contribute to SDG13 and the country's commitment to climate change. For instance, the law on the protection of air quality was adopted in April 2018. By setting emission standards, roles and responsibilities and penalties on polluters, once implemented this law will contribute to the reduction of emissions and improvement of air quality.[79] The same applies to article 55 of law 79/2018 (2018 National Budget Law), which establishes customs and registration reductions on hybrid and electric cars.

In 2017 two NAMAs targeting the transport and municipal solid waste sectors were approved by the Council of Ministers. They aim to increase the use of fuel-efficient and hybrid vehicles. Since then (consistent with article 55 of law 79/2018), Lebanon has abolished 100 percent of taxes on electric vehicles and 80 percent of taxes on hybrid vehicles. As part of its Paris Agreement commitments, Lebanon has set targets for public transport mode at 36 percent (unconditional) and 48 percent (conditional), and 20 percent (conditional) for fuel-efficient vehicles by 2030. In 2017 the Ministry of Agriculture's forestry programme to plant 40 million trees was also endorsed.

Lebanon has mainstreamed climate change adaptation into various sector strategies. The National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (adopted in 2018), the National Water Sector Strategy (adopted in 2012), the Ministry of Energy and Water's national energy strategies, and the forestry strategies all include climate change action. For the first time, the Ministry of Agriculture introduced 'Responding to Climate Change Impacts' as one of its central courses of action in its 2015–2019 strategy. It intends to assist the agricultural sector to better adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce its emissions, and to introduce adaptation measures.

Lebanon has also promoted climate change adaptation in other vulnerable sectors such as tourism, human settlements and infrastructure and public health. A low emission development strategy is being prepared in consultation with national stakeholders. The National Adaptation Plan—a strategy that aims to identify medium- and long-term adaptation needs and corresponding action plans—is also underway.[80]

Combating climate change in Lebanon requires stronger political leadership and technical capacities in, and coordination among, the line ministries with integration of climate change action into national development planning. The delay in the Paris Agreement ratification entails the adjournment of the needed legal decrees to operationalize the Nationally Determined Contribution implementation, the transparency provisions and the long-term low emission development strategy.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

SDG 14
Life Below Water

Stretching along the Mediterranean Sea from north to south, Lebanon's marine resources and seashore are of high environmental, economic, political and social value. Lebanon's shore extends about 230 km along the Mediterranean Sea and is globally acknowledged for its rich biodiversity. The coast includes Lebanon's largest cities, where around three-quarters of the population live.

Lebanon is party to the 1976 Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Sea Against Pollution and its amendment (Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region in the Mediterranean, Barcelona 1995); the London Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (1973) and from Oil (1954 and 1994); the Jamaica Convention of the Sea (1982); the Law of the Sea (Montego Bay, 1982); the 2008 Protocol on Integrated Coastal Zone Management in the Mediterranean, which draws on the Barcelona Convention; and the 2002 Prevention and Emergency Protocol (pollution from ships and emergency situations).

A draft national integrated coastal zone management law has been prepared, which could, along with the environment protection law, determine new principles for the protection of the coast and marine environment. At the same time, along the lines of the National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese Territory, the Council for Development and Reconstruction is preparing a master plan for the coastal zone that could facilitate work towards SDG14 and connections with the social and economic SDGs.[81]

In 2018 the Cabinet endorsed the National Biodiversity Action Plan (prepared in 2016) that includes the protection of coastal and marine biodiversity.[82] Lebanon has two coastal protected areas: The Palm Islands Nature Reserve and the Tyre Coast Nature Reserve. The Ministry of Environment's Marine Protected Areas Strategy (prepared in 2012 in collaboration with other stakeholders) aims to create a network of protected areas consisting of nine marine or coastal sites, five estuary sites, and between one and four deep sea sites. Lebanon's coverage of protected marine areas is estimated at around 0.2 percent.[83] The marine protected areas strategy has three objectives that support SDG 14.

1. Establish a more systematic approach to marine protected area planning.
2. Enhance collaboration in management and monitoring of these areas.
3. Increase awareness, understanding and participation of the local community in the marine protected areas network.

Despite these measures, the coast still suffers from population pressure and unplanned urbanisation, rapid privatisation that restricts public access to beaches, sand extraction and sea reclamation. Industrial waste, wastewater and solid waste are sometimes dumped at the coast without treatment, and two large sanitary landfills serving Beirut and Mount Lebanon are located on the coastline.[84] However, the largest adverse impact remaining was caused by the Israeli attacks on Lebanon in 2006 that resulted in an oil slick along the entire Lebanese coast.

This was an 'environmental disaster… that had serious implications for livelihoods and economy of Lebanon…'. In response, the United Nations General Assembly adopted 12 resolutions and provided Lebanon with USD856.4 million in compensation.

The CNRS-L's National Center for Marine Sciences is running a national coastal monitoring programme of 25 sites to better manage the Lebanese coastal zone and help create marine protected areas. This programme includes evaluating the environmental status of the Lebanese coastal water, studying the impact of diverse anthropogenic pollution sources on the seawater quality, and studying the accumulation of organic, chemical and microplastics pollutants in water, sediment and biota. The CNRS-L is evaluating the biology, distribution, growth and status of several exploited fish stocks and invasive species along the Lebanese coast, to start managing them sustainably. It is also studying the biology, distribution and diversity of cartilaginous fish species (sharks and rays).

15 LIFE ON LAND

SDG 15
Life on Land

Lebanon's favourable geographic location in the Mediterranean is considered to be a biodiversity 'hotspot'. Lebanon hosts 0.8 percent of the world's species and 12 percent of endemic terrestrial and marine plant species, on a land area of 0.007 percent of the world.[85] To protect this richness, Lebanon has created 15 nature reserves, 3 biosphere reserves, 16 protected forests, 16 protected natural sites or landscapes, 4 Ramsar sites, 5 world heritage sites, and 15 important bird areas. Forests cover about 13 percent of the country and other wooded lands cover 10 percent.[86] Lebanon's second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2016–2030) (endorsed by the Cabinet in April 2018) aims to increase nature reserves to five percent of its territory by 2030 and increase natural terrestrial and marine ecosystems within the protected areas network to 20 percent. The strategy addresses Lebanon's obligations under international conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, considers global and local needs and aspirations.[87]

The proportion of forest, within legally established protected areas in Lebanon, is currently no more than 2.6 percent, yet concerted actions by the government, civil society, and private sector have raised the annual reforestation to 0.8 percent. This exceeds the annual estimated deforestation rate of 0.4 percent.[88] Notwithstanding this achievement, reforestation comes at a high financial cost so prevention and protection are important.

The Lebanese government has several programmes to restore forests including the National Action Plan to Combat Desertification, the National Afforestation and Reforestation Programme and the 40 Million Trees Programme. Other projects that target biodiversity conservation have also been implemented.[89]

Lebanon is party to international agreements such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, Rio de Janeiro, 1992; the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, Paris, 1994; the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (and specifically Waterfowl Habitat of 1999); and most recently the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization under the Convention on Biological Diversity (ratified in April 2017). These international agreements have benefited Lebanon by building its capacities in sustainable biodiversity protection.

The second National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan mentioned above addresses Lebanon's obligations under international conventions, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, while taking into consideration both global and local needs and aspirations.

Biodiversity and land natural resource protection are covered by the Forest Code. Other laws are being developed such as the draft law on Protected Areas Framework Law that would define establishment criteria, objectives and modalities for different protected areas. Another law is being drafted to regulate access to Lebanese's biological and genetic resources and ensure equitable sharing of benefits as part of the Nagoya Protocol.[90] A draft law on forest fires and a draft Law on Forest Fires and the draft Bio-safety decree are also underway.

Sustainable land management is governed by Decree-Law No69 of 1983 on urban development. This is Lebanon's main legal framework for planning. Under this law, the Council for Development and Reconstruction developed the National Physical Master Plan of the Lebanese Territory in 2005 (approved by Decree 2366, 20 June 2009), but faces numerous challenges in enforcing it.

Decree-Law No. 69 of 1983 also called for localized detailed urban plans to be made that include zoning and a regulatory framework that sets out the plots, categories, and construction rules for each zone. Unfortunately, this important land management tool is currently limited to 32.2 percent of Lebanese territory,[91] up from 16.2 percent in 2004.[92]

The impact of the Syrian crisis, and large numbers of informal settlements, have negatively affected Lebanon's land use and ecosystem and impacted on its land. The dramatic population increase has led to haphazard and accelerated construction in all affected host communities.

The CNRS-L funds several research projects, through its local grant research programme and International research programmes, related to conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems, promoting sustainable management, combating desertification, restoring degraded land and soil, conserving mountain ecosystems, and biodiversity. In 2017/2018 the CNRS-L funded 245 projects with a total value greater than USD6 million, of which half was targeted to natural resource management, water management, marine and biodiversity and renewable energy. The CNRS-L has also launched the OLife initiative to collect, perpetuate, share and valorise environmental information between French and Lebanese scientific research communities.

Lebanon's investments in water, wastewater and solid waste, within consistent with the CEDRE vision, will fill current service provision gaps with the aim of all households being connected to the networks, displaced Syrians having water and wastewater facilities, and a solution being found to the solid waste crisis that Lebanon has faced in recent years. Through these investments the government seeks to reverse the environmental deterioration that has taken place.

V.III Prosperity (SDGs 8, 9 and 11)

Lebanon ranks 105 out of 149 on the Legatum prosperity index. Since the index started in 2006, Lebanon has moved down the ranking table by 19 places due to a series of shocks that reduced real growth to an average of 1.7 percent between 2011 and 2016, compared with an average rate exceeding eight percent in between 2007 and 2010.[93]

The unemployment rate is high, especially after the Syrian crisis since which an estimated 200,000 Lebanese have been pushed into the poverty (adding to the already one million poor[94]) and an additional 300,000 Lebanese have become unemployed.[95] The crisis cost Lebanon around USD18 billion between 2011 and 2015. In the Lebanese economy, informal waged employees constitute a significant portion of the labour force.

In addition, 93 percent of companies are classified as micro and small enterprises. Lebanon's ecosystem for entrepreneurship and SMEs has been developing over the past decade, and an enabling environment had been created for start-ups through legislation and access to financing. The financial sector remains one of Lebanon's largest, with assets close to four times GDP and a proven resilience to crises. In order to revamp its economy, the government presented its capital investment plan and a reform package to the CEDRE conference. Meanwhile other strategies have been prepared to deal with other crucial aspects such as labour rights, industrial development and SME growth and expansion.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

SDG 8

Decent Work and Economic Growth

Lebanon has been in a period of economic stagnation since 2010. It faced a series of shocks that reduced real growth to an average of 1.6 per cent between 2011 and 2017 (as per WEF figures, April 2018), compared to an average rate exceeding 8 per cent in 2007-2010, even scoring 9.2 per cent according to the national account figures for that period. The Lebanese economy has traditionally relied on the services sector. Tourism[96] and real estate and construction[97] each make up 20 per cent of GDP.

Low growth in Lebanon over the past seven years is explained by the loss in confidence that followed the start of the Syrian crisis, coupled with the tense political environment which paralysed political decision making during that period and played a major role in the drop of growth rates. Tourism, exports, real estate, and private investments were all affected. Even after a new president was elected, a new government was rapidly formed in December 2016, and political and economic activity resumed, growth has still not picked up.

The real growth rate of GDP per employed person[98] has been negative due to the weakening of the productive sectors.[99] This situation was coupled with limited decent job creation because of low employment growth elasticity, which is amongst the lowest in the region.[100] New jobs have mostly been in low value-added services. In 2012 the unemployment rate was estimated at 10 percent but, according to the World Bank, it doubled after the Syrian crisis erupted.[101] The situation is more acute for women and youth, whereby the unemployment rate is double and triple respectively.[102] The average duration of unemployment is also long: estimated to be close to one year.

The last available study on the distribution of labour force by employment status estimates that informal-waged employees account for almost 20 percent and more than 30 percent of them are self-employed in low value-added activities.[103] This informality is associated with poverty.[104] The Lebanese public administration employs 30 percent of wage-earning employees.[105] Together, formal and informal waged employees account for more than 70 percent of the labour force.[106] OMSAR's Afkar programme is building civil society's capacity in vocational, industrial and agricultural sectors to increase employment opportunities in rural and marginalised areas.

Formalisation of micro and small enterprises has been limited.[107] Around 73 percent of Lebanon's establishments are classified as microenterprises (less than 10 employees), while 93 percent are classified as micro or small (less than 50 employees).[108] Lebanon's ecosystem for entrepreneurship and SMEs has been developing over the past decade. An enabling environment has been created for start-ups through legislation, access to financing (the establishment of Kafalat and Central Bank subsidised loans), and more recently a wide range of private sector support for entrepreneurship.[109]

SMEs are identified as 'the economic engine for growth towards creating a globally competitive landscape that contribute to employment opportunities and high value-added economy' in the Ministry of Economy and Trade's national SMEs strategy.[110] The strategy aims to support SMEs grow by promoting innovation and ensuring business viability, sustainability and competitiveness. Through the strategy, the Ministry of Economy and Trade is working on a national job creation

programme aimed at addressing gaps in the spectrum of financing solutions available to SMEs. The ministry is also working with the WB to provide matching grants and support for entrepreneurs including women, youth and lagging areas. The Kafalat plus programme (a partnership between the Ministry of Economy and Trade and the EU) offered loan guarantees to existing SMEs and conventional starts-up to help them develop their business ideas or activities by providing access to finance in five different sectors: industry, agriculture, tourism, high technology and craft. OMSAR also funds projects that provide management training to small businesses to ensure growth and productivity. OMSAR has taken the lead on a digital transformation strategy for the government, to radically improve its citizen services and operations.

Lebanon has also been enacting development-oriented strategies that support the traditional productive sectors (agriculture and industry)[111] to increase productivity while minimising environmental degradation.[112] However, the manufacturing and agriculture sectors have faced difficulties over the last few years, particularly after their exports declined following the Syrian conflict, and they report limited job creation.[113]

Table 4: Percentage of adults aged 15 or more with a bank account

Bank accounts	2011	2014
Poorest 40 percent of population	18	27
Population with primary education or less	23	33
Population with secondary education or more	45	55
Rural population	30	42
Rural population - women	26	33
Rural population - men	49	62

Source: World Bank Findex Databas

The financial sector is one of Lebanon's largest with assets close to four times GDP and a proven resilience to crises.[114] Access to financial services has progressed.[115] Almost 60 percent of the population aged 15 and above has a bank account (Table 4).[116] This is relatively high compared with other countries of the region.[117] There are 39 automated teller machines per 100,000 adults and 24 commercial bank branches per 100,000 adults.[118] When income groups, education levels and gender are considered, the data shows some gaps; whereas data on bank lending tends to be skewed thus reflecting some concentration.

During the CEDRE conference Lebanon presented the four pillars of its vision for Stabilization, Growth, and Employment based on four pillars: (i) sharply increasing the level of public investment in the short term by implementing projects financed by committed foreign loans, and embarking on a major capital investment programme of new infrastructure investment projects to lay the basis for long-term growth, with an increased role for the private sector; (ii) ensuring economic and financial stability through fiscal adjustment; (iii) undertaking sectoral and governance reforms (including fighting corruption, fiscal reforms, modernisation and restructuring of the public sector and capital market reforms) to ensure the sustainability of the infrastructure investments; and (iv) developing a strategy to diversify Lebanon's productive and services sectors. Lebanon's vision relies on a private sector-led economy and on generating employment through a sharp increase in public investment—every one billion USD spent is expected to generate 50,000 jobs directly orindirectly. Crowding-in private investment will further increase employment.[119]

In line with SDG8 and SDG9, the Lebanese Parliament is reviewing the Code of Commerce, including its provisions related to companies and corporations, to modernise the legal status of businesses. An e-transaction and protection of personal data law has also been discussed in Parliament and should be adopted soon. This law regulates the ICT sector in Lebanon and identifies the legal basis for electronic signature, e-commerce, e-banking services; establishes a signatures and e-services authority; regulates and supervises the work of e-data hosting platforms and the management of websites and domains (.lb); and ensures personal data on electronic platforms is protected. In March 2018 the cabinet submitted draft laws to Parliament on private equity funds, facilitation of secured lending, institutionalisation of judiciary mediation, revision of the insolvency law, and establishment of a legal framework for insolvency practitioners. Plans have also been developed for out-of-court workouts. A short- and medium-term plan is being implemented to streamline and re-engineer the business registration processes and provide a one-stop-shop for opening a business. A business support unit has been established in the Investment Development Authority of Lebanonaimed at providing start-ups with free information, advice and licensing support.

The Capital Market Authority is currently implementing a market development plan with WB support. The plan aims to transform the Beirut Stock Exchange into a joint stock company as a first step before privatisation (a government decree was issued for this purpose in August 2017). The plan also includes launching an electronic trading platform that would include SMEs and start-ups, and would provide access to trading by the Lebanese diaspora.

The government is also developing a strategy to diversify Lebanon's productive sectors and realise its export potential. It contracted McKinsey to diagnose the crosscutting and specific constraints to expanding and diversifying the productive and services sectors and, taking into account experiences in other countries, to identify potential sectors to develop or expand. The study will provide recommendations for actions and policies the government needs to realise the identified potential, which complement existing actions and initiatives underway to improve the enabling environment for private sector investment. Meanwhile, sector plans[120] for industry, agriculture and tourism are underway to address the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of development, specifically integrating SCP.[121] The Ministry of Economy and Trade has been working on projects to boost economic exports and investments as part of its 2015 strategic plan.

The Ministry of Labour's strategy on decent work is currently being prepared with the ILO,[122] and is expected to improve the protection of workers. The ministry is already working with NGOs to improve the working conditions of women migrant domestic workers. A national jobs programme is also underway, funded by the WB. It targets policies and mechanisms that foster partnerships with the private sector and lay the policy foundations for job creation.[123]

Well-aware of its public finance weaknesses, Lebanon aims for fiscal adjustment by implementing the necessary measures on revenues and spending to gradually reduce the fiscal deficit. This was evident when the 2017 Budget was ratified as it was the first one to become a law in 12 years. The Budget was preceded by a new public sector salary scale that was voted in with commensurate revenue measures to fund it. In March 2018, the 2018 Budget was passed. It includes a drop in deficit compared with the previous Budget. This reflects a strong commitment to correct macroeconomic imbalances while creating room for capital spending.

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

SDG 9
Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Lebanon's economy is based on open trade and trans-border connectivity and the country's physical infrastructure was designed to achieve this. However, following a series of shocks and persistent fiscal constraints, the gap between infrastructure supply and demand has widened and needs have changed. The impact of the Syrian crisis was reflected in as a significant decline in the Lebanese industrial sector. Border closures have restricted trade with Syria and neighbouring countries, and caused a drastic decline in industrial exports to neighbouring countries. The industrial sector faces multiple obstacles to its development, but has promising potential, particularly once Lebanon embarks on the infrastructure investment programme planned for in the Vision for Stabilisation, Growth and Employment.

Lebanon utilises land, air, and maritime borders as crossing points for passengers and goods.[124] Movement at the Port of Beirut and the Rafiq Hariri International Airport reflect the features of an economy that is heavily dependent on trade and had good global connections. Land transport of goods suffered a lot as a result of the war in Syria and border closures: it dropped 33 percent between 2011 and 2017. The Lebanese economy tried to adapt to this challenge by shifting from inland to maritime transport, as the government launched the Maritime Lebanese Exports Bridge.[125] Freight volume[126] at Port of Beirut has grown since 2011. Passenger activity at the Rafiq Hariri international airport has also increased by 46 percent (arrivals) and 48 percent (departures) since 2011 figures (Figure7).[127]

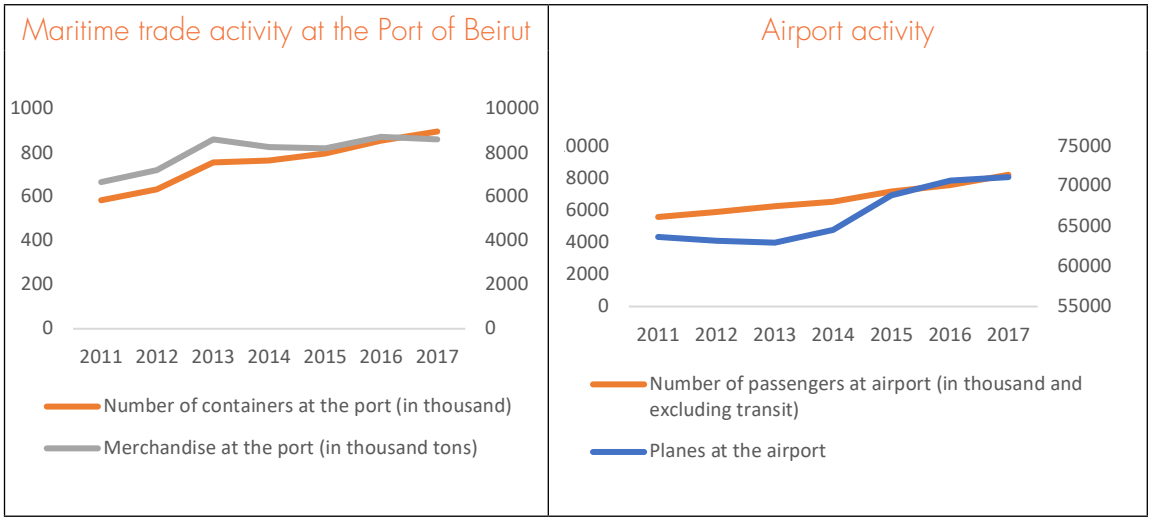


Figure 7: Airport and Port of Beirut indicators of activity

Source: Directorate General of Civil Aviation Lebanon and Port of Beirut[128]

A maritime bridge for exports [129]

Before the conflict in Syria, most Lebanese goods were exported through Syria. The crisis caused Lebanon's land routes to other Arab states to be closed and Lebanese exports faced a major impasse. Exporters faced higher transport costs and insurance companies were reluctant to cover merchandise.

In response, in 2015 the Lebanese government and the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon launched the Maritime Lebanese Exports Bridge (M.LEB) programme to cover part of the cost of exporting Lebanese products to Arab countries by sea. The M.LEB program subsidises the difference between land and maritime transport costs for agricultural and industrial exports to Arab countries. M.LEB initially spanned seven months from May 2016, but was renewed until May 2018 as a result of a continuous monthly increase in shipped goods.

M.LEB has been able to ensure the flow of Lebanese products to traditional markets, particularly the Gulf states, Iraq and Jordan. It has facilitated the export of Lebanese products, maintainedthe credibility of Lebanese producers, industrialists and farmers with their trading partners in these markets, and ensured they canmeet their third party commitments.

Industry

The Ministry of Industry has mainstreamed the relevant SDGs (1,3,7,9,11,12 and 17) into its integrated vision (Lebanon industry 2025), executive strategy for 2016–2020 and operational plans for 2017 and 2018. The strategy has seven operational objectives. The most relevant objectives to SDG9 are expanding the domestic market by increasing production and reducing imports; increasing industrial exports; increasing the internal and external competitiveness of the national industry; increasing investment and financing in the industrial sector; encouraging green industry; and encouraging knowledge-based industries.

The ministry's 2016–2020 industrial strategy estimated that there were 134,000 workers employed in manufacturing in 2016.[130] In 2017 a statistical study (Project of the Permanent Industrial statistical system), based on data from year 2015, estimated industrial output at USD13.2 billion and imports at USD19.58 billion.[131] Industrial exports reached USD2.474 billion in 2017, which represents 18.74 percent of industrial output. The value of domestic demand for foreign and local goods reached USD30.31 billion in 2017,[132] which explains the growth of the industrial output. A 2017 study of Lebanon's manufacturing 'product space'[133] revealed that the country is capable of developing new complex products, such as electrical machinery and chemicals.[134] In addition, when compared with the Arab region, Lebanon ranks well in terms of its cultural and socioeconomic environments fostering creativity and its level of business sophistication—a measure of knowledge absorption and innovation linkages.[135]

Nevertheless, the industrial sector contributes to environmental degradation through air emissions, water consumption, and wastewater and solid waste discharge. The Ministry of Environment considered that 'the overall contribution of the industrial sector to air pollution is mostly due to the combustion of fuel sources to produce electricity/energy on-site.'[136]

Table 5: Overall percentage contribution of the industrial sector to air emissions in 2013

	CO_2eq	NMVOC	SO_2	NO_x
Manufacturing industries and construction	17.0	–	25.0	12.0
Industrial processes	9.7	4.4	1.5	–

Source: Ministry of Environment[137]

An SCP action plan for the industrial sector in Lebanon has been developed to move the country towards industrial sustainability and achievement of SDG9 and SDG12, and a low emission development strategy is being prepared. The ministry aims to increase the industrial sector's share of GDP to 13 percent by 2020.

SDG9 Good practice: Lebanon starts to develop three industrial zones

The Ministry of Industry is organising existing industrial zones and constructing new and sustainable industrial zones in all Lebanese regions. Preliminary studies to establish four industrial zones in municipal properties (Turbol-Qusai, Bekaa; Baalbek, Bekaa; Al-Kaa, Bekaa; and Al-Mtein, Metn) have been completed and work is underway to secure the necessary financing for design and execution that will include rehabilitating existing industrial zones. Potential donors include EIB, EBRD, Italian Cooperation and the Dutch government. The industrial zones will host 250 new industries and relocated companies, and will include agro-food businesses, car repair and services, construction, creative industries and potential incubators. Off-site costs, such as rehabilitating or constructing access roads, are included in the project, where they are needed for the industrial zones. The initiative is expected to directly create 4000 new jobs and an additional 15,578 indirect jobs.

Innovation

Many national actors are already support SMEs. Lebanon has developed an entrepreneurship ecosystem with a focus on creative sectors and innovation. The Central Bank of Lebanon has been subsidising businesses in productive sectors, especially research and development costs. SMEs also receive support from private companies like Kafalat, which offers loan guarantees based on the viability of the proposed business activity. This also applies to the Investment Development Authority of Lebanon's projects that focus on investment promotion, export promotion, and support for business start-ups. Lebanon's Industrial Research Institute has projects that target innovation, research and development by providing technical and scientific support to Lebanese industrialists.

The Presidency of the Council of Ministers has launched two initiatives to support the innovation ecosystem in the country. The first is 'Summer of Innovation' that promotes youth to participate in extracurricular activities in innovation, science, technology, entrepreneurship and creativity. The second initiative is the 'Public School Innovation Gates' (co-prepared with the Ministry of Telecom and the MEHE), which connects public schools to the internet and sets up tech hubs in public schools to provide students with innovation, science, technology, entrepreneurship and creativity activities.

The Ministry of Environment (with the WB, Banque du Liban and Italian Cooperation) have created the Lebanon Environmental Pollution Abatement Project (www.LEPAP.moe.gov.lb) to help industries identify their environmental problems, and help them obtain financing through close to zero percent subsidised loans so they can comply with the regulations. Once fully compliant (as per decree 8471/2012), industries are eligible for an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) from the Ministry of Environment that can be used as a marketing tool locally and internationally.

The CNRS-L works closely with UN agencies on an innovation technology programme. It is one of the four main partners of the LIRA programme.The CNRS-L has also released the 'Science, Technology and Innovation Policy' (STIP) a policy on science, technology and innovation that links socioeconomic needs with qualified human resources available in Lebanon. The policy stresses the need for partnerships between all stakeholders in Lebanese society in order for its implementation to besuccessful.

Infrastructure

Lebanon's infrastructure was devastated by the 1975–1990 conflict. After a post-war reconstruction programme ended, the level of public investment has declined steadily to about three percent of GDP between 2001 and 2005 and two percent between 2006 and 2010. As a result there were already significant gaps between needs and supply before the Syrian crisis, particularly in water supply and wastewater. One-quarter of households are not connected to the water network and one-third of households are not connected to the wastewater network. The gap between electricity supply by Electricite du Liban and demand for electricity is also about one-third.

With increasing fiscal constraints during the Syrian crisis, public investment has declined further between 2011 and 2017. Capital expenditure was only 1.4 percent in 2016 and 2017. At the same time, the rate of private investment declined from almost 30 percent between 2007 and 2010 to just over 20 percent between 2011 and 2015.

Supply-demand gaps of infrastructure, particularly in the electricity sector, have widened with the presence of displaced Syrians. UNDP estimates the additional population has resulted in providing around 480 additional MW, equivalent to nearly one fifth of installed capacity. The existing public infrastructure has also deteriorated, partly for the same reason. For example roads have suffered from an estimated 15 percent increase in nationwide traffic.

The government is prioritising a sharp increase in public investment through accelerated implementation of projects for which loans have already been extended. It has also prepared an ambitious CIP that covers water, wastewater, solid waste, transport, electricity, telecommunications, and infrastructure for tourism and industry. The total cost of the CIP over its two phases (2018–2021 and 2022–2025) is estimated at USD17.25 billion.

The CIP was prepared by the CDR in consultation with all ministries. Its approval by Cabinet represents an important step in improving public investment planning in Lebanon. The programme will be reviewed and updated annually so that project sequencing and implementation is adjusted to reflect evolving priorities. For many projects, the detailed appraisals, including financial viability analysis and environmental and social impact assessments, are yet to take place. One of the selection criteria for CIP projects was their potential to contribute to the SDGs.

Investments in the electricity, transport and telecommunications sectors will help increase productivity of Lebanon's economy and reduce business costs. Investments in transport will generate large time savings and reduce pollution from emissions.

Lebanon remains one of only afew countries where the telecommunication sector is fully owned by the government. The sector is a main source of government revenue. The government intends to develop and adopt a telecom policy aimed at liberalising the sector and opening it up further to private sector investment and utilisation. This entails a revision of the telecom law (Law 431). The government also intends to appoint a telecom regulatory authority and a board of Liban Telecom, which will lead to its corporatisation. OGERO (the state-owned telecommunications operator of the fixed line) is investing in projects to upgrade the fixed-line network (built in the 1990s as part of the government's post-war recovery programme) and deploy a nationwide fibre–optics–based broadband network. The two state-owned but privately-operated mobile companies (Alfa and Touch) are investing in projects to finalise a nationwide deployment of 3G and 4.5G network with high coverage and high quality service. A significant part of the sector investments is financed from sector revenue. However, about USD250 million has been identified as potential IPP projects. These projects include building a cloud-based national data centre offering various types of services, and deploying a third submarine cable connecting Lebanon directly to Europe. This would prepare Lebanon to be a tier-2 internet hub serving the region.

The WB's assessment of the CIP confirmed that the programme can be an effective tool to help reinforce Lebanon's depleted infrastructure and boost economic growth. It concluded that, if well implemented, the CIP can increase Lebanon's growth potential, generate employment opportunities, and make the Lebanese economy more competitive. It also emphasized that the choice of sectors are appropriate, many of the projects are relevant and some are critical, many of the projects have been in the planning stages for a long time, sector reforms are essential to make the projects sustainable, and private sector participation is necessary.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

SDG 11

Sustainable Cities and Communities

Lebanon has been experiencing rapid urban expansion. This comes with complex problems including ensuring everyone has access to services and affordable housing, and protecting the environment. National and local actors are responding to this problem across relevant sectors.[141] About one in five displaced Syrians live in urban areas. This has led to increased population density and put more pressure on public services.[142]

Lebanon's NPMPLT is its overarching urban development framework.[143] It defines development principles for the proposed urban structure of four major regions that will ensure balanced territorial development. It also proposes the objectives, dimensions and locations for facilities and planning sites.

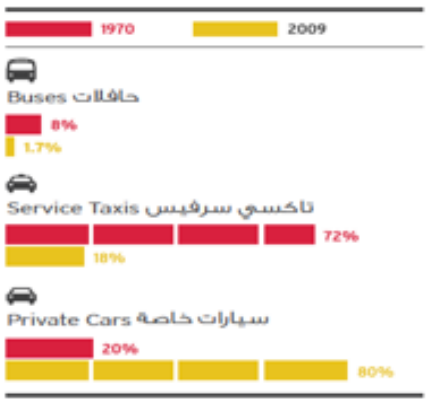
A number of actors, including local authorities (municipalities), the Directorate General of Urbanism, the Higher Council for Urban Planning, the CDR and various ministries, are working on urban planning. Most urban plans address territorial scales, issues, and sectors—using various tools and mobilising distinct networks—with a focus on spatial, technical, legal and aesthetic considerations. The challenge is to combine these plans into an integrated vision, consistent with the NPMPLT, and ensure they effectively target environmental sustainability and climate change vulnerability in line with economic and social policies.[144]

Given this fragmented urban planning landscape, a Ministry of State for Planning was established in 2016. This ministry started to develop a national urban policy and the 'Habitat III National Report for Lebanon', with support from UN-Habitat and other institutions concerned with urban planning.[145]

Housing remains one of the challenges linked to urban expansion. Lebanon has public institutions (the Public Corporation for Housing and the Housing Bank) that support low-and middle-income households by offering them subsidised loans. The housing sector consumes substantial amounts of energy and most structures have inefficient insulation, which leads to high costs for cooling and heating.

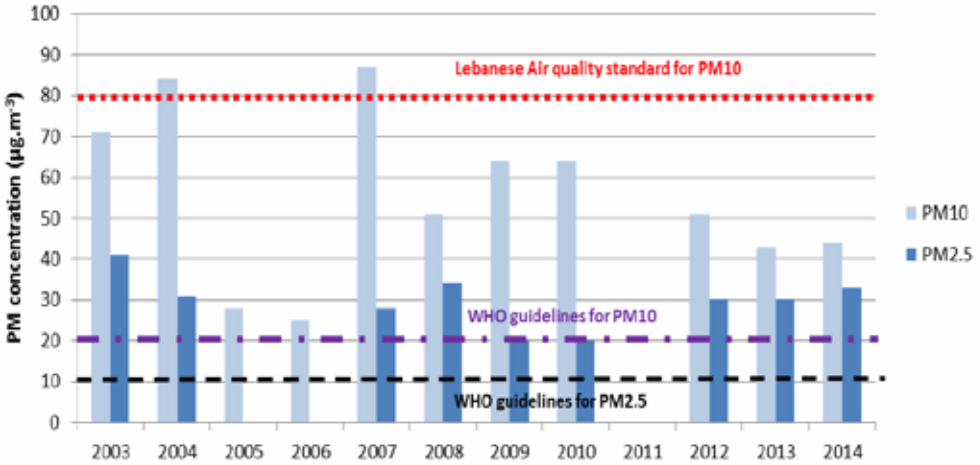
Another problem linked to urban expansion is pollution created by transport. In the quasi-absence of public transport in Lebanon, the transport system[146] mainly consists of private cars with a low occupancy of 1.2 passengers per car. Transport is a high priority for the government: it accounted for more than a third of the funding requested at the CEDRE conference with projects worth around USD5.6 billion.[147] Through the Urban Transport Development Project for greater Beirut, the CDR has completed new road projects, including rehabilitating and constructing tunnels and bridges. This project also had a traffic management organisation component to better manage traffic. More recently the WB approved funding for the Greater Beirut Public Transport Project that will jumpstart the country's first modern public transport system, ease stifling congestion on Lebanese roads and unlock private finance to a vital infrastructure sector. This project will fall under the newly approved public-private partnership law that aims to attract private infrastructure investment.[148] A Bus Rapid Transit project is also being tested for feasibility. The design concept proposes a re-configuration of the Beirut ring road to include the rapid bus transit.[149]

Figure 8: Use of public transport



Source: CDR [150]

Figure 9: Particle matters over Greater Beirut as a measure of pollution (SDG indicator 11.6.2)



Source: Ministry of Environment

Rapid urban expansion often comes with the gradual loss of green spaces. To increase green public spaces, a pioneering project on soft mobility, 'Liaisons Douces', is being studied by the Municipality of Beirut. This project would include creating different scales of public and green spaces, greening city streets, and providing safe pedestrian and cycling tracks along main city axes. The project has not yet been implemented.

Pollution is relatively high in cities. Air quality, based on different assessments and measurement technologies, is below international standards. Although the Ministry of Environment has recently completed the installation of monitoring stations across the country, updated official reports of air quality results have not yet been published. At the end of 2017 the ministry released a national air quality management strategy based on the recently adopted air quality protection law (Law 78/2008). The strategy, intended to continue until 2030, has all the elements of sector and cross-sector legal and policy frameworks, long-term goals, and a short-term action plan with expected results and priority actions that should be achieved by 2020. It also includes implementation, monitoring and evaluation modalities.

Disaster risk reduction has been another priority for Lebanon. A Strengthening Disaster Risk Management Capacities in Lebanon project has been launched by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers to support the government's efforts to reduce exposure and vulnerability, to reduce

the risk of disasters. A fully operational disaster risk reduction management unit, a national disaster coordination committee, and a national operations room have also been established. A national disaster management strategy and draft disaster law have been developed by the Municipality of Beirut, with support from the WB. The municipality launched a project in May 2015 to improve Beirut's infrastructure and make the city more resilient to earthquakes and other natural disasters. This project has involved a current state evaluation and developing a master plan on resilience.[151]

The CNRS-L is responsible for measuring seismic activities and CBRN emissions through its Geophysical Center and Atomic Energy Commission respectively. The CNRS-L supports the government toimplement the Sendai framework, particularly its priorities onunderstanding disaster risk and strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk. The CNRS-L is responsible for releasing all hazard and risk maps (earthquake, flood, landslides, forest Fires and droughts), and has released several hazard and risk assessment reports for each of the governorates' critical infrastructure, and for the agriculture sector. The CNRS-L contributed to the national disaster management strategy.

The CNRS-L has established an early warning systemin the remote sensing centre called the sustainable natural resources management platform and early warning system (SuNaR)". This system is designed to strengthen the monitoring and forecasting of hazards for disaster risk reduction; assist with emergency operations, prevention and preparedness actions; and produce high quality information for decisionmakers and stakeholders. It forecasts hydro-meteorological hazards and releases a daily report tothe civil defense on the potential for forest fires for the next 72 hours. It also provides a daily record of natural hazards and fatalities, and monitors snow cover. This system is a priority within the national disaster management strategy and is perfectly mainstreamed into the government's disaster risk reduction activities.

Despite these urbanisation challenges, Lebanon's biggest cities have succeeded in preserving their old cities as historical heritage. Within its small territory, Lebanon has five UNESCO world heritage sites. These historical areas have been effectively preserved through the WB's Cultural Heritage and Urban Development Project, and the risk of losing heritage assets, due to unplanned reconstruction, has been mitigated. Lebanon is also endowed with a rich natural heritage including its north to south coastline. A coastline master plan, or land-use strategy, is currently being developed[152] that will ensure the socioeconomic and environmental dimensions of development are balanced and integrated.[153]

Lebanon's cultural and natural heritages are major components behind strengthening the tourism sector, particularly eco-, historical, cultural and religious tourism. Tourism is one of the biggest contributors to the Lebanese economy: it accounts for around nine percent of GDP and, in 2016, provided around 123,500 employment opportunities. Tourism also plays a major role in promoting SCP, and sustainable use of land and water resources, thus contributing to the SDGs, particularly SDG 8,12 and 14. Religious tourism has significant importance given Lebanon's old and rich religious background as historical crossroad for two of the world's major religions, Christianity and Islam. It has a rich religious heritage of sanctuaries and holy places: there are more than three thousand places of worships across the country.

A project on cultural religious tourism, (CRT) recently launched by the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, aims to promote local development, foster a constructive partnership between industry, local residents and their representative governments, preserve the country's cultural heritage, and put Lebanon on the global cultural religious tourism map. In the long run, the project be instrumental in turning Lebanon into a major pilgrim destination and potentially contribute to national peacebuilding. The project's activities include coordinating the development of a cultural religious tourism master plan and securing stakeholders' (especially regligious authorities) buy-in for its implementation, coordinating the launch of a project awareness campaign to encourage private sector participation, monitoring the master plan, and implementing pilot projects in Qana (South Lebanon) and Taynal Mosque in Tripoli (North Lebanon).

The cultural religious tourism project aligns with SDGs related to the tourism sector as it places a high priority on integrating sustainable tourism into national policymaking as well as on policy coherence and integration with other cross-cutting sectoral initiatives; will ensure all tourism stakeholders are consulted and involved; links to other ministerial local development projects on capacity assessment and strengthening of tourism value chains for enhanced local economic impact; and aims to incentivise the private sector to conduct research and develop into sustainable technology and innovation, and apply this to the business models of tourism companies.

In the medium to long-term, this project will stimulate economic activity in various districts of Lebanon by increasing employment across the various economic sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, and construction. It will raise awareness of the need to protect the country's natural resources and lead to improvements in the natural environment. It will also involve communities in local development and ultimately reduce regional socioeconomic disparities.

SDG 11 Good practice: Boosting local economies by preservingthe heritage of old cities

The WB-funded cultural heritage and urban development initiative aimed to create conditions for increased local economic development and enhanced quality of life in the historic centres of Lebanon's five main secondary cities: Baalbek; Byblos (Jubail); Saida; Tyre and Tripoli. The initiative ended in 2016 and an evaluation of its results showed it had succeeded in rehabilitating historic urban cores in compliance with approved regulations.

At the policy level, the initiative helped to establish an integrated system of laws and decrees to improve how cultural heritage is conserved and managed at the country level. It resulted in the reform of the Ministry of Culture and, in 2016, the issuing of decrees needed to complete the adequate regulatory framework.

The local economic development impact on businesses, institutions, residents and tourists was quite noticeable. The vast majority of restorations of the old city has improved it as a place to live or visit. Businesses now have more investment and employment opportunities, while residents have noticed more employment becoming available to them in the tourism sector.

On another front, the government promotes volunteerism in Lebanon, by including it as an objective in the 2011 National Social Development Strategy. A National Permanent Committee on Volunteering was established by the Council of Ministers in 2002 with defined roles and consists of delegates from public institutions, civil society, media, university student associations, private sectors and international organizations. MoSA has allocated resources since 2011 into the National Volunteer Service Program (NVSP) of the ministry in particular to promote youth civic engagement across the country through volunteering. MOSA also allocates funds for its Volunteer Work Department to organize 2-week summer camps, one in every governorate 'Mouhafaza' (5 in total) involving students and youth in soft and conflict resolution skills trainings and engaging them in volunteering initiatives. Also, MEHE initiated the Community Service project in public and private schools in September 2012 (decree number 8924), and it was re-activated in all public and private schools starting from the academic year 2016 -2017, in accordance with the provisions of MEHE resolution 607/M/2016 and the guidelines of the Community Service Project Guide and its annexes. The project consists of 60 hours service over three years of secondary school cycle and aims to prepare students to exert positive influence in the society and to exercise participatory citizenship through volunteering. MEHE figures identify 70,000 students in the three years of the secondary cycle by 60 hours of community service results in 4.2 million hours of volunteerism among students.

V.IV Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG 16)

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

SDG 16
Peace

The Government of Lebanon is committed to global initiatives, particularly the SDGs and PVE.

PVE is especially important to Lebanon in view of the dangers posed by terrorist groups, and the violent extremists they inspire, which recruit youth who are easy to exploit, train and brainwash given their vulnerability and frustration. This presents a serious threat to core work of the international community: maintaining peace and security; fostering sustainable development; promoting and protecting human rights and the rule of law; and humanitarian action.

Lebanon's Council of Ministers responded by forming an inter-ministerial working group (led by a national coordinator) that developed a prevention strategy including systemic measures to directly address the drivers of violent extremism. These drivers include the lack of socioeconomic opportunities, marginalisation, unemployment, discrimination, poor governance, human rights violations, distortion and misuse of beliefs, and prolonged and unresolved conflicts. These are factors that can transform ideas and grievances into violent extremist actions, and drive individuals to radicalise and join violent extremist groups. Lebanon's PVE Strategy has been endorsed by the Cabinet. It will be coupled with a comprehensive implementation plan.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, with EU support, is leading work on a draft national counter terrorism strategy. The ISF have adopted a 2018–2022 strategy aimed towards 'ensuring a more secure society'. It focuses on fostering stability, safety and security; partnering with society; protecting human rights and raising accountability; and building the ISF's professional capacities, effectiveness, and efficacy.

Terrorist and violent extremist groups hold territories and use social media to globally communicate their violent and extremist ideas and messages of intolerance, spreading hatred and destabilising countries and regions. In recent years, this spread of violent extremism has further aggrevated an unprecedented humanitarian crisis leading people to flee the territories controlled by those groups and causing major displacement waves. With flows of foreign terrorist fighters increasing, serious threats have been posed to the national security and stability of destination countries. Since 1948 Lebanon has hosted half a million Palestinian refugees and, for the past seven years, the Lebanese government has made tremendous efforts to deal with displacement as this poses a continuous threat to Lebanon's sovereignty, stability and regional peace and security.

In response, the government has drafted the Lebanese crisis response plan as part of a regional refugee and resilience plan that addresses refugee protection and assistance needs in the entire region. The government has also delivered policy reforms aimed at mitigating the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon, and alleviating current and future human suffering.

The Lebanese Armed Forces have retaliated to a series of terrorist threats and conducted successful military operations that protected Lebanon's borders and managed to hunt down a number of terrorist cells in different districts within the country.

In March 2018 the international community renewed its confidence in, and commitment to support, Lebanese authorities tomaintain stability, security and sovereignty. The international conference in Rome supported the national security forces (Lebanese Armed Forces and ISF), and commended Lebanon's security institutions for its success in keeping up with complex requirements for maintaining Lebanon's security and stability. Lebanon's updated capability development plan of its armed forces was welcomed, as was the ISF's five-year strategic plan. The Lebanese government laid out its military and security needs, and pledged for more support to enhance the capabilities of the Lebanese army and security forces to preserve Lebanon's borders and stability.

Taking advantage of this window of stability, Lebanon is pushing forward with reforms to enhance the governance regulatory framework. During the last two years, legislative activity was active in this domain, starting with Parliamentary ratification of laws that strengthened the fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism. Currently Lebanon is finalising its adhesion to the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism of 1999. The government has also established an internal system to detect and expose terrorists, undermine their proliferation, restrict their freedom of movement, impede and decrease their finances and thwart their attempts to perpetrate terrorist acts on or from its territory.

Justice

All fundemental rights and freedoms are enshrined in the Lebanese constitution. Moreover the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are part of the Lebanese constitutional bulk, as they are mentioned in the preamble of the Lebanese consitution. Consequently the Lebanese authorities are committed to take measures in order to guarantee rights in the following areas.

1. Reducing violence: Law 236/2014 related to domestic violence was adopted in 2014, and the government has recently voted in favour of adjusments that make this law more effective. Law 162/2011 annuled the 'crime of honour' and, on 16 August 2017, the Lebanese parliament adopted a law that abolishs article 522 (criminal law). A draft law related to the abrogation of articles 505 and 518 (criminal law) is under consideration. The Ministry of State for Women Affairs has drafted a law to criminalise sexual harrasment in working and public places. The draft was adopted by the government on the 8 March 2017 and is being considered by Parliament.

2. People trafficking: In 2011 Lebanon adopted Law 164 that considers people trafficking one of the most dangerous crimes. Workshops have been held, in partnership with UNHCR, to train Lebanese armed forces and the ISF in the best ways to fight trafficking. Trafficking victims, when found, are sent to associations for treatment and recovery.

3. Pre-trial detention: Pre-trial detention is one of several problems that Lebanese authorities face, especially since the influx of displaced Syrians. During preliminary investigations, Lebanese judges always use alternative measures to pre-trial detention such as release on bail and a flight ban with submission of travel documents.

4. Birth registration: On the 8 February 2018 the government approved a mechanism, proposed by the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, to register the newborn babies of displaced Syrians. This new mechanism registers babies in the ministry's foreigners' register and sends the birth certificates to the Syrian embassy via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants.

5. Independent national human rights institutions: On 27 October 2016 Lebanon adopted Law 62 that establishes independent national human rights institutions and a national prevention mechanism consistent with Paris principles. On 21 May 2018 the government decided to nominate 10 of its members.

6. Reduced inequalities: OMSAR is promoting human rights through the EU-funded Enhancing Human Rights and Democracy in Lebanon programme.

Three major EU-funded judical reform programmes are currently being implemented in Lebanon.

1. The Modernisation of the Lebanese Judicial System programme supports the automation of operations and procedures of judicial courts by developing software and procuring hardware at the Beirut Palace of Justice and the Jdeideh and Jounieh courts.

2. The Support to the Reform of the Judiciary programme is reinforcing judicial institutions' capacity by providing technical expertise from EU member states, and supporting the Lebanese legal aid system to increase access to justice for vulnerable populations by enlarging places for detention and constructing new ones.

3. The Advancing Juvenile and Criminal Justice in Lebanon programme is enhancing the judiciary's capacity to handle terrorism cases in full compliance with international legal instruments and human rights norms, standards and good practices.

To reinforce efforts to combat and prevent torture against victims and ensure appropriate legal frameworks are in place to protect them, in 2017 Lebanon, with EU support,has established a forensic medicine centre at the Palais de Justice in Tripoli. This centre will be piloted for two years and, following an assessment, it will be rolled out to courts of justice in all governorates.

Strong Institutions

The public-private partnership (PPP) law was also ratified in 2017. The PPP law will be applied to government and municipality projects, such as infrastructure.

A public procurement law that is expected to enhance the transparency and efficiency in contracting has been sent to parliament.

The Higher Council for Privatization and Partnership will be the authorized party for approving, launching, and managing projects, and it will act as the liaison between the private sector and government bodies. A regulatory authority will be established for each concerned sector to issue, renew, and terminate licenses. The authority will also approve service charges and impose fines. The projects will be proposed by the Higher Council for Privatization and Partnership, or the concerned ministry. The council should study the project and then submit a report explaining the feasibility of doing the project through PPP. Mutual projects are then referred to the Council of Ministers for approval. Projects related to municipalities should be referred by the mayor or the federation to the council.

In 2017, Lebanon adopted a new parliamentary electoral law based on proportionality that ensured a more accurate representation. This electoral authority consisting of judges and representatives of civil society made sure to respect gender considerations.

Other reforms include the ratification of the legislation on tax transparency and a law facilitating the right of the public to access information. Furthermore, in a strong signal towards the resumption of normalcy in financial legislation, parliament passed the 2017 national budget – the first official budget in the last 12 years. This was coupled with a law to modernize and restructure the public sector,154 including the development of a unified system for all social benefits to public sector employees, as well as the establishment of a system of evaluation of their performance.

The Government is committed to the reforms envisaged under Law #46 dated 21/8/2017 aims at modernizing public administration and containing spending. These include: 1) freezing of civil servants' employment, (unless approved by a cabinet decision), 2) designing a unified system for all social benefits to employees of the public sector, 3) reviewing the government's policy on subsidies and contributions to mutual public funds, 4) rationalizing fuel expenditure in public administrations, 5) evaluating public employees performance. The cabinet established on 26/10/2017 an inter-ministerial committee mandated to conduct a comprehensive survey of the existing positions and vacancies in the public administration (civil servants, contractual and other wage earners) as well as the creation of new required positions. It will also identify the total current and future outlays for human resources, including end of service indemnities.

Also, the Government revived the Economic and Social Council by appointing 71 new members, after 15 years of inaction.

In April 2018, OMSAR launched a national anti-corruption strategy and its implementation plan outlining four main strategic objectives: (i) enshrining transparency; (ii) activating accountability; (iii) limiting discretion in public administration; and (iv) ending impunity – in addition to the action required for their effective implementation. The preparation of a plan for its implementation is currently underway, with assistance from UNDP, and is to be completed in 2018. Parliament is also expected to adopt legislation for the establishment of a National Anti-Corruption Commission155. Furthermore, OMSAR developed a comprehensive strategy for government digitization. OMSAR also has worked with both, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Tourism on automating their systems to simplify their processes and procedures for citizens.

The Government has submitted to Parliament a draft law on "Enhancing Transparency in the Petroleum Sector in Lebanon", which contains most of the provisions of the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). The draft law has been recently approved by the Parliament's Energy Committee and is on course to be ratified by the Lebanese Parliament General Assembly. A draft law on establishing a sovereign wealth fund is also being debated in Parliament.

More recently, the government, as part of the consultation around the vision presented to the CEDRE conference in April 2018, emphasized the importance of building partnerships and consulting with the private sector and civil society and other stakeholders when implementing reforms to ensure their sustainability and irreversibility.

The government is committed to achieving the sustainable development goals related to peace, justice and strong institutions. The internal and regional developments in the last decade laid many challenges in the way of progress, not least of them the is influx of millions of displaced people into Lebanon from neighboring countries and the burden this has carried along on the infrastructure and the economy. Therefore, it is a concrete priority for the Lebanese government to proceed in devising plans and harnessing support from the international community to hasten the return of displaced persons to their home countries as part of its endeavor to achieve development and preserve stability.

V.v Means of Implementation & Strengthening Partnerships

(SDG 17)

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

SDG 17
Partnerships for the Goals

Despite the challenges of a deficit and the slow economic growth, Lebanon is determined to mobilise the funding it needs to implement Agenda 2030 through partnerships with the international community. This community demonstrated its relentless commitment to Lebanon and the domestic and foreign private sector at the recent CEDRE conference.

Although Lebanon's public finance deficit is equivalent to 9 percent of GDP, it still managed to end 2017 with a primary surplus. Government revenue is less than 20 percent of GDP.[156] Approximately one-third of government revenue originates from tax on income, profits, and capital gains (direct taxes). The remainder comes from indirect taxes.[157] Government finances are constrained by two large items that absorb more than the total revenue, and which account for two-thirds of expenditure. Servicing public debt accounts for more than one-third of expenditure and is equivalent to almost half of the total revenue. [158] Personnel costs also accounts for approximately one-third of expenditure,[159] despite almost 70 percent of formal civil service posts being vacant.[160] The government relies heavily on contractual employment, although it has recently filled some senior positions. [161]

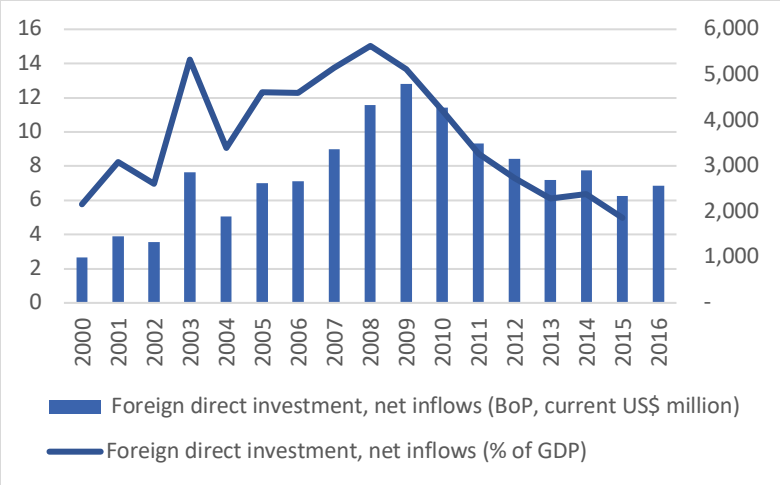
The transfer to cover the electricity utility's chronic deficit is another large expenditure item. It is estimated at USD1–2 billion annually, plus the incremental cost (estimated at USD1 billion between 2012 and 2016 period) of increased demand by displaced Syrians.[162] As a result, government capital expenditure has been squeezed to a mere 6 percent of total public expenditure. Social spending has also steadily declined—public spending on social security and health has dropped, from 4.5 percent of GDP in 1990 to about 2 percent in 2015.[163]

By 2017 public debt had climbed close to 150 percent of GDP.[164] Lebanon sees increasing capital spending through concessional lending while decreasing the deficit, and pursuing structural and sectoral reforms, as the way to reverse recent trends and lay the basis for sustained growth in the medium to long term. Since most public debt is held by the Central Bank of Lebanon and the Lebanese banking system, refinancing risk is lower than expected for a heavily indebted country.

Lebanon also has a historically high trade deficit, which accounts for more than 22 percent of GDP. Exports to imports coverage dropped to 16 per cent by 2016, after exceeding the 20 percent during the second half of the 2000s. The Syrian conflict, and more recently strained relationships with Gulf countries, has negatively impacted on trading partners and routes. Lebanese exporters face internal and external barriers to export. The external barriers are mainly non-tariff measures (technical and non-technical barriers to trade). Historically the trade deficit has been managed by regular private financial flows—mainly remittances and FDI— from the widespread Lebanese diaspora.

Lebanon finances its deficits and refinances its debt through the Lebanese banking sector, which attracts deposits from the Lebanese diaspora and from FDI accounted for around 3.6 percent of GDP between 2011 and 2016, versus 9.5 per of GDP between 2000 and 2010. Most of this investment has been in real estate, with little impact on the SDGs.[165] For various reasons, including regional economic conditions and the impact of the conflict in Syria, remittances dropped from 25 percent of GDP ten years ago[166] to 16 percent of GDP in 2016.

Figure 10: FDI in nominal values and as a percent of GDP



Source: World Development Indicators

Data shows that pledged aid does not fully materialise. Of more than USD2 billion pledged after the 2006 Israeli attacks on Lebanon, only 62 percent had been received by the end of 2012. Of USD 7.6 billion pledged in 2007 at the Paris III conference, only 56 percent had been received six years later.[167] The 2015–2016 LCRP states that during the 2015–2016 period less than half of the amount Lebanon had requested to support displaced Syrians had been received (USD 1 billion per year)[168].

At the CEDRE conference in April 2018, more than USD11 billion in grants and concessional financing from bilateral and multilateral donors was pledged to Lebanon, securing financing for the first phase of the proposed CIP. Lebanon's high deficit and debt ratios mean that it can only rely on highly concessional financing and private sector resources to finance its development agenda. Therefore, Lebanon will continue to tap into the World Bank's Global Concessional Financing Facility to finance development projects. Lebanon will also actively mobilise private sector funding to implement its infrastructure projects through different forms of PPPs.

Multilateral and bilateral donors and international organizations also provide technical assistance through their partnerships with Lebanon.

Lebanon has pursued a trade liberalisation policy. In 2001 tariff rates were significantly reduced. In addition to bilateral agreements, Lebanon has a number of free trade agreements with large trading blocks, such as the Greater Arab Free Trade Area, the EU, the European Free Trade Association and the Gulf Cooperation Council. Lebanon is in the process of joining the Agadir Agreement with Egypt, Jordan and Morocco. Lebanon is in the process of becoming a member of the World Trade Organization.[169]

Lebanon is doing work to improve its data and statistical capacity. The CAS is mandated to collect, process, produce and disseminate social and economic statistics at the national level, and to provide technical supervision of statistics to ensure harmonisation and consistency. CAS performs surveys of living conditions and multiple indicators, and other types of field research. Recently it concluded a census of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and is currently conducting a labour force survey that will provide much-needed information on employment, labour force and living conditions.39 There is room to improve the quality of data and the frequency of it, so that reporting against indicators is regular, harmonised and coherent. This could be achieved by increased coordination and information sharing between public administrations, in accordance

with the institutional mechanism established to implement the SDGs. CAS is already participating in the SDMX—a global initiative to standardise and modernise the mechanisms and processes for the exchange of statistical data and metadata between international organisations and their member countries. This work should improve the frequency and quality of data and the production of indicators for the SDGs.40

Strengthening Partnerships: PPPs that support the SDGs

Under the PPP law ratified in 2017, the HCP is responsible for tendering PPP projects. The PPP law is a major step towards the accomplishing SDG17 as partnerships with the private sector will be the principal mode to provide essential public services. Given the PPP law has adopted the PFI's definition of PPPs, SDGs are targeted as PPP projects will normally be financed by the private sector, with much of financing by FDI.

PPPs are expected to be used for delivering essential public services across the different infrastructure sectors, therefore contributing to multiple SDGs. PPPs will be adopted as an effective tool to deliver good health and wellbeing (SDG3), quality education (SDG4), clean water and sanitation (SDG6), affordable and clean energy (SDG7) and sustainable cities and communities (SDG11).

By incorporating a social tariff structure into PPP projects, the HCP will focus on ensuring that there is equitable access to affordable essential basic services for all citizens, including the poor and vulnerable (SDG1). Job creation is expected to alleviate poverty as each major infrastructure project is capable of creating thousands of jobs that will attract young university graduates (SDG8, target 8.6) and blue-collar workers.

As infrastructure is a key driver for job creation and economic growth, infrastructure PPP projects (including electricity production and distribution, public transport, solid waste management, telecom and civil aviation) will also be a cornerstone to achieving SDG8 and SDG9. The PPP law encourages companies to provide services at efficient costs. Given the current mediocre level of public services, and the ensuing growth of the informal sector, restoring quality essential services through PPPs will ultimately result in service provision being formalised (SDG8, target 8.13).

The PPP law aims at instilling good governance into the tendering process for PPP projects. It ensures transparency through a participatory approach involving all stakeholders and public disclosure of information. It also ensures professionalism through a dedicated PPP unit (target 16.5).

Among the potential PPP projects identified for the CEDRE conference, in February 2018 the HCP Board officially approved three to be tendered as PPPs. The HCP has launched the procedures for the preparation of transactions and is currently retaining advisory teams to undertake due diligence studies and prepare tender documents. The three projects, aimed at developing quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure (SDG9), are:

1. the expansion of Beirut Rafic Hariri International Airport, which will establish trans-border connectivity (target 9.1).
2. the Khalde–Nahr Ibrahim expressway, which will establish regional connectivity (target 9.1).
3. the national data center, which will increase access to information and communications technology (target 9.c).

The HCP is also keen on promoting 'People First' PPPs. It is currently investigating the possibility of tendering the olympic swimming centre on a PPP basis and preparing template tender documents

for small municipal wastewater PPPs, which will be provided to municipalities interested in tendering for these types of projects.

HCP's commitment to the SDGs is further demonstrated by its secretary general actively promoting 'People First' PPP standards inhis role as vice chair for the UN working party on PPP. Other HCP team members have also been actively involved in UNECE's workon 'People First' PPPs across different sectors by acting as the chair of the water and sanitation working team (SDG6), a member of the zero tolerance to corruption working team (target 16.5) and a member of the women empowerment working team (SDG5).

The HCP is hosting the UN's International Centre of Excellence in PPP for Ports. This centre aims to contribute to UNECE's efforts to achieve the SDGs by promoting private sector participation in the ports sector—a main driver of economic growth. The centre will identify international best practice models, establish strategic partnerships, communicate with stakeholders, and develop and sustain global expertise in PPP for ports. The centre's main activities are:

1. researching PPP best practice models in the ports sector.
2. maintaining a digital database and library of worldwide PPP port projects.
3. establishing and operating a dedicated online platform.
4. drafting the international standards for PPPs in the ports sector, which will be subject to public review as per UNECE procedures.
5. assisting the government and private sector companies on PPPs for ports.
6. ogoanising, hosting and funding regular workshops, training programmes, seminars and webinars on PPPs for ports.
7. publishing and disseminating information on PPP for Ports.

As the entity entrusted with tendering and awarding PPP contracts, the HCP has undertaken to use its best efforts to implement the 2030 agenda. It will endeavor to align the PPP contracts' key performance indicators with SDG indicators whenever possible. This will help to monitor progress towards achieving the SDGs.

VI Non-governmental stakeholders engagement with SDGs

Keen to strengthen its cooperation and join efforts with its local partners in the road towards successful implementation of SDGs and Agenda 2030, the government actively involved the private sector and the civil society organizations in this process by designating two representatives of each of these sectors as official members in the national committee for SDGs. Hence, the national committee includes two representatives of the private sector and two representatives of the civil society organizations, whose roles are to consult with stakeholders within their own sectors and domains about their involvement in the SDGs implementation process and to coordinate on their behalf with the government.

The Lebanese Private Sector and SDGs

The Federation of Lebanese Chambers has carried over various activities that support the SDGs. The federation aims to boost national economic growth, promote a socially and environmentally responsible business culture, spread transparency and governance best practice, foster human development, and encourage gender equity and equal opportunities within the framework of social, educational, and environmental projects and programmes. This section describes some key initiatives that have been implemented by regional chambers.

In 2017 the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon launched a new HEC entrepreneurship programme in collaboration with ESA to provide Lebanese students with a high quality international executive programme and limit the flow of students overseas. Since 2013 the chamber has also been an active partner in ENPI CBC MED development projects that cover business, environmental and social topics. Examples include GMI to raise awareness about recycling, SHAAMS to promote renewable energy solutions and MEDDIET to safeguard traditional healthy Mediterranean food. Following a food safety crisis in 2016, which affected Lebanon's food and restaurant sector, the Chamber established the Lebanese Food Safety Training Centre. The centre organised free training courses on food safety, hygiene and contamination control for more than 1,500 kitchen workers from restaurants and food sections in supermarkets.

The Chamber of Commerce Industry and Agriculture of Zahle and Bekaa (CCIAZ) is actively involved in sustainable development. It has prepared a comprehensive list of projects submitted to political references to lobby and assist in implementation. This list covers economic and investment initiatives such as establishing a dry harbour, economic and tourism zones, free zones and construction of an eco-highway. The chamber also contributes to international institutions' programmes aimed at protecting Litani River from pollution. It is also working with universities and international institutions to train youth and farmers to improve their competencies and to help them access the labour market.

The Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Saida and South Lebanon (CCIAS) is focused on improving economic activity to improve the welfare of the southern community. It founded the Centre for Innovation and Business Development (South BIC) to support small enterprises and promote innovative entrepreneurship. The chamber is also supporting food industrialists through the agro-Food Development Centre and its accredited laboratories. Recently the chamber launched a capacity building programme to support farmers adopt alternative

crops, and to empower women and men involved in food processing, handicraft and agro-industries. The chamber opens up its premises to exhibitors and business events serving all the southern districts. The preliminary study for one ambitious project, to establish a modernised industrial city, has been submitted to the official concerned authorities.

The Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture of Tripoli and North **(CCIAT)** has implemented more than 50 activities that contribute to the SDGs. In support of SDG1 the chamber has implemented a project on necessity entrepreneurship that created self-employment opportunities for unemployed vulnerable individuals. The chamber created 'Business Incubation Association in Tripoli' (BIAT), which has developed a strategy to serve this segment and is recognized for specialising in necessity entrepreneurship. The chamber and BIAT have also trained thousands of beneficiaries, some of which have gained entrepreneurship opportunities and access to the job market. In support of SDG2, the chamber has supported agricultural production and exports in the north of Lebanon. More than five renewable energy projects have contributed to SDG7. The last of these will be finalised by July 2018 and will result in 250 solar street panel lights installed in Halba, Akkar. Since 2006 the chamber has supported a Business Incubation and Business Development Centre that contributed to SDG8. BIAT has supported more than 3,000 start-ups, and created and sustained more than 10,000 jobs. It is recognised as a good example by the EuroMed databank. Finally, in support of SDG9, the chamber has created a laboratory to research agriculture and agro food products. The laboratory has unique equipment, available for the northern region, and an excellent reputation for its scientific approaches. Furthermore, CCIAT/BIAT is recognized as a hub for innovative SMEs and start ups. BIAT has helped launch many successful ICT companies. Its approach towards' opportunity' entrepreneurs is based on technology and services. Many of its beneficiaries become stars of the business support ecosystem. In addition to the lab and Incubator, the Chamber has implemented more than 50 projects, the majority of which support the implementation of SDGs.

Civil Society Organizations in Lebanon and SDGs

Lebanon's civil society is one of the most active in the Middle East.[172] Lebanese CSOs include NGOs; ethnic, family, alumni or neighbourhood associations; clubs (such as sports, cultural, artistic); federations; scouts, youth and students' groups; local branches and foreign associations; scientific and research centres; religious organisations; political parties; chambers' of commerce; trade unions; professional associations; and cooperatives.[173] CSOs in Lebanon date back beyond the birth of the country and stem from a spirit of volunteerism. According to MoSA's latest records, by April 2014 there were 8,311 registered CSOs and an additional 180 youth and sports clubs.[174] Many CSOs are working on SDGs through various programmes.

As part of the national process to implement the SDGs, in June 2017 the Council of Ministers issued Decree 69 that established an inter-ministerial national committee for enhanced coordination. There are two civil society repsresentatives on the committee (Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Developmentand Caritas Lebanon). Late in 2017 the Lebanese Government has organised several workshops and meetings that demonstrate it is strongly committed to engaging all stakeholders in implementing the SDGs, and hearing their visions, priorities, challenges and needs so that no-one will be left out of Lebanon's SDG strategy.

The Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development and Caritas Lebanon consulted with over 300 representative CSOs across Lebanon on the VNR. The purpose of the consultation was to raise civil society awareness ofthe VNR and High Level Political Forum (HLPF) at the United Nations process, Agenda 2030 and the SDGs; to drafting a contribution to the VNR by civil society stakeholders and present it to the the national committee; and to define an inclusive process through which civil society actors could engage in the implementation of Agenda 2030, monitor the progress of the SDGs and support the national committee through its two CSO representatives.

National CSO Consultations Methodology

The main CSOs working towards SDGs in each region were identified through desk review and exisitng links with CSOs, local authorities and partners. Over 1,000 CSOs were identified and invited to participate in the national consultation. Face-to-face consultation took place through workshops with 300 CSOs in four regions across Lebanon. The 300 CSOs selected were a representative sample of regions, sectors, working areas and size. The consultation helped set CSO priorities, challenges and recommendations on the five pillarsof the SDGs: planet, people, prosperity, peace and partnership.

Main findings, recommendations and way forward

The consultation found the main priorities are poverty eradication; upgrading public sector education; reducing unemployment, especially amongst youth; upgrading and enhancing critical infrastructure; conserving natural resources (sustainable agriculture, waste and waste water crisis); making cities sustainable; and addressing the impacts of the Syrian crisis on sustainable development.

The regions identified their key priority goals:

1. **North and Akkar:** eradicating poverty, conserving green cover and supporting farmers, upgrading and enhancing infrastructure, and decentralisation.
2. **Beirut and Mount Lebanon:** achieving gender equality, addressing the waste and waste water crisis, conserving the environment, and enhancing employment opportunities.
3. **Bekaa:** enhancing infrastructure, decentralisation, environmental conservation (especially addressing Litani River pollution), enhancing public education, and addressing unemployment.
4. **South:** empowering and engaging youth, addressing unemployment, enhancing public sector education, enhancing good citizenship, and basing public recruitment and employment on capabilities.

The **main challenges** CSOs face are corruption; a lack of transparency and good governance in public institutions; sectarianism; law enforcement; outdated legislation; centralisation; access to data; the impacts of the Syrian crisis; and the absence of a comprehensive social protection strategy especially for the most vulnerable people.

The CSO's made a number of **recommendations**:

1. Address corruption, enhance transparency and accountability within public institutions, move towards an e-government that supports this endeavour with access to information, and ensure that employment within public institutions is based on capabilities and not on sectarianism or political affiliations.
2. Base all SDG strategies, programmes and projects on local context and national priorities and needs.
3. Raise awareness of good citizenship. This is essential to ensure active engagement and local ownership of any SDG result.
4. Protect the environment, especially in relation to waste and wastewater. This is essential to safeguard Lebanon's natural resources and ensure basic rights to a healthy living. Providing more support to farmers with sustainable agriculture is also necessary.
5. Support the most vulnerable groupsby developing and implementing a comprehensive social protection strategy and plan.
6. Address unemployment, especially amongst the youth and in rural areas, which has been affected by the impacts of the Syrian crisis.

7. Upgrade the education system and infrastructure.
8. Enhance the knowledge of decision-makers (including ministers, parliamentarians and mayors) on the SDG goals so they can integrate them in development planning.
9. Actively engage CSOs in developing and implementing work towards the SDG goals.
10. Update legislation and policies and ensure law enforcement.
11. Proceed with local decentralisation reforms, especially at the municipal level, to support implementing work towards the SDG goals.

The national consultations process was successful, as it captured and reflected CSOs' work, challenges and recommendations to support the implementation of work towards the SDGs in Lebanon. However,the process had limitations and challenges. With over registered 8,000 CSOs, the major challenges were not having a unified CSO database, incorrect CSO contact details, no classification criteria for CSOs, outdated information, and insufficient time. In future it is recommended that relevant ministries update and share information on Lebanese CSOs; that CSOs are classified by specialisation, area of work and size; and that CSOs network amongst themselves to avoid duplication and so that in future their impact can be measured, accredited and supported.

Annex I of this document, on the **National Consultations with Civil Society Organizations on the VNR for Lebanon,** reflects CSOs challenges and aspirations. They are a major part of making progress with sustainable development as they continue to bring citizens' voices to national agendas and strategies. Lebanese CSOs continue to work with, and support, the government toimplement its agenda and deliver services, while holding the government accountable for its commitments and advocating for change, including concerning the SDGs. Therefore it is necessary to integrate CSOs' voice, partnership, challenges and recommendations within the VNR and the SDG national strategy.

Conclusions, challenges and limitations

The CSO's national consultations process was successful since it captured and reflected CSO's work, challenges and recommendations to support the implementation of SDG's in Lebanon. Meanwhile the process had its limitations and challenges. With over 8000 CSO's registered in the country, the major challenges were lack of a unified CSO database, wrong contact details, lack of any classification criteria for CSO's, outdated data, time constraints. From this perspective there is a recommendation for concerned ministries to update and share information on CSO's in Lebanon, more important is the need to classify CSO's by specialization, areas of work, size and network among each other to avoid duplication of work so that in the future the impact and support they provide can be measure and hence supported. Moreover, there is a need to provide CSO's with accreditation and further support to achieve their objectives.

This report reflects CSO's challenges and aspirations, as described above there is a strong need to tackle corruption, advance in the development of sound policies, enforce laws and implement sustainable strategies that leaves no one behind hence the necessity for decentralization. Further CSO's raised the voice on the impacts of the Syrian crisis especially in vulnerable regions and the need to invest in infrastructure, economy, and people while protecting the environment.

As a final note, Lebanon's CSOs are a major pillar for progress and sustainable development, as they continue to bring about citizen's voices to national agendas and strategies. Lebanese CSO's continue to work with and support governments in implementing their agendas, delivering services, holding governments accountable to their commitments, and advocating for change, including around the SDGs. As such it is a necessityto integrate their voice, partnership, challenges and recommendations within the VNR and the SDG national strategy.

United Nations Global Compact Network Lebanon (GCNL)—**Lebanon Chapter**

The UNGC is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative. It is a strategic UN platform, officially launched at the UN's headquarters in New York on 26 July 2000, to encourage companies around the globe to align their strategies and operations with ten universally accepted principles of human rights, Labour, environment, and anti-corruption.

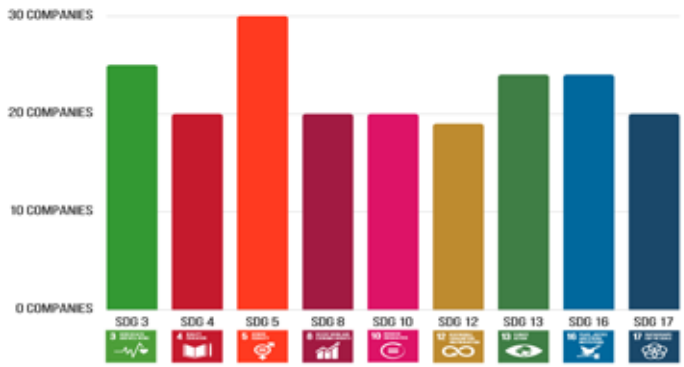
The global compact now has more than 75 networks across the world and more than 13,000 participants. These include 9,000 business and 4,000 non-business participants who are working towards a sustainable and inclusive global economy that delivers lasting benefits to people, communities, and markets.

Global Compact Network Lebanon (GCNL),the Lebanese national chapter of this initiative, was launched in September 2015 and is hosted at the American University of Beirut (AUB). GCNL works closely with the UNGC headquarters to provide learning, policy dialogue and partnership opportunities on the 10principles of responsible conductand the 17 SDGs.

With more than 160 businesses and non-business participants enrolled in the Lebanese network to date, GCNL aims to create an engaged community that advances sustainability practices nationwide. GCNL encourages participants to mainstream the 10 principles into their daily activities and report on their implementation. Recently the GCNL has invested its effort and resources into mobilising businesses, CSOs, local authorities and the broader Lebanese society to work together on the SDGs and the UN's 2030 Agenda. The Lebanon network has grown, become one of the most respected in the MENA Region, and earnt 'advanced' status by UNGC standards. GCNL is advancing the UN's 2030 Agenda in Lebanon by working closely with the private sector, as well as the chambers of commerce and trade, the Council of Ministers, UNDP and other players in the Lebanese ecosystem.

GCNL members' 2017 reporting was used to identify the SDGs that the private sector are most involved with. The results include SDG5 (gender equality), SDG3 (good health and wellbeing), SDG13 (climate action), SDG16 (peace, justice and strong institutions), followed by SDG4 (quality education), SDG8 (decent work and economic growth), SDG10 (reduced inequalities), SDG12 (RCP) and SDG17 (partnerships for the goals) (figure 1).

Figure 1: SDGs most addressed by the private sector



However, without clear public policy signals and collaboration between the private and public sectors and civil society, the GCNL members' reporting shows there are significant gaps in the private sectors' involvement in important SDGs (figure 2). SDGs 1, 2, 6 and 14 are almost untouched by the private sector in Lebanon and GCNL is aiming to increase the sector's participation in work towards them.

Figure 2: SDGs least addressed by the private sector

The GCNL continues to expand the network and membership by leading relevant initiatives that provide capacity building, vocational training, focus groups and conferences, and also help visibly mainstream sustainability and the SDGs. Here are some examples from 2017/2018:

Human rights: ProAbled is an online job opportunities platform for people with disabilities.

Anti-corruption: providing in-depth training with UNDP and post-training advocacy groups.

Environment: Environmate is an environmental accelerator roundtable under the Lebanon Climate Act.

Education: Sustainable Minds is a competition for school students aimed at raising their awareness of the SDGs. Search For Common Ground is a peacebuilding programme aimed at stimulating the private sector's involvement with peace building efforts.

Research, panels and workshops such as the multi-stakeholder SDG forum, Lebanon collaboration for the SDGs, strategising for the SDGs workshop, communication on progress workshop, SDG focus groups and SDG national reports are used to identify opportunities, challenges and critical priorities in relation to each SDG.

One of GCNL's most remarkable milestones has been establishing a SDG Council in 2017. The first of its kind, this council's members are highly credible change agents and CEOs, strongly rooted within the Lebanese community and who act as national ambassadors and voices of change for the SDGs by supporting SDG initiatives and plans.

Continuing to pave the way in the SDG field, GCNL is launching the SDG Pioneers Awards and the Sustainability Label in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce. It has already launched, in 2018, the AUB Pledge for the SDGs—a proposal to enhance action-oriented research around the SDGs and mobilise building the research infrastructure needed to make further progress with the SDGs in Lebanon.

The sustainable development agenda can only be realised with a strong commitment to partnerships between government, the private sector, civil society and others at all levels. GCNL will continue to seize the momentum set by private sector buy-in and engagement with the SDGs, and will work collaboratively with other ecosystem players to help make progress towards the UN's 2030 Agenda and ensure that no-one in Lebanon is left behind.

VII Conclusion

Lebanon's 2018 VNR has reviewed the status of the SDGs at a time when the country had just embarked on a trajectory towards realising them. The review process received solid political support at the highest level and an institutional mechanism was streamlined for that purpose. Despite prevailing challenging political and economic conditions, Lebanon is already on track to achieve some SDGs such as in the sectors of health, education and gender.

The level of awareness and ownership of the SDGs is visible across all public administrations. This is translated into serious engagement, notwithstanding the challenges associated with implementing the ambitious global agenda.

Integrated planning

The SDG framework requires medium to long term planning that responds to national circumstances, priorities and resources. In this connection, as mentioned in previous chapters, four ministries have developed medium-term strategic plans that demonstrate, to a certain extent, success in integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Lebanon's current institutional setup for achieving the SDGs aims towards ensuring integrated planning at the national level, through a bottom-up approach, as demonstrated by the formation of the national committee, where all relevant administrations are represented at the DG level, along with representation from civil society and the private sector. This was followed by the establishment of thematic groupings, to coordinate strategies and policies, integrate planning according to the 5Ps, and measure progress on SDGs against SDG targets, whether those set by the UN system or national proxy indicators. Partnership is a cross-cutting issue, which is automatically integrated at the core of all thematic groupings. Also, a special task force for SDGs statistics was formed, with representation in all of the thematic groupings. Here, it is also worth noting that although the thematic groupings may be working independently from each other, their work will be later on integrated at the level of the national committee. Moreover, some groupings could work together to address multi sectoral challenges facing sustainable development, such as along the water-food-energy nexus or the pollution-health-infrastructure nexus.

Moreover, the Government is keen to continue consulting with and involving the private sector and the civil society organizations, through their representatives in the national committee, in order to: (1) join forces towards efficient planning and partnership, and (2) complement the role of the government in attaining the SDGs and fill the gaps where needed. This would ensure that the "leaving no one behind' principle is applied through a wider inclusive participatory approach.

The institutional setup to implement SDGs, at the executive level, along with the Parliamentary committee on SDGs, should allow for timely monitoring and evaluation of the social, economic and environmental impact of national policies. That said, institutional capacity building remains a key challenge that needs to be addressed through additional technical assistance and international support.

Partnerships

Lebanon faces the challenge of high fiscal deficits and debt ratios. Implementing the SDGs will require substantial outlays that Lebanon will aim to finance through highly concessional lending from (1) international donors and institutions, and (2) mobilizing private sector resources, including potential diaspora funding, into developmental projects. The adoption of the PPP law by Parliament in 2017 will allow Lebanon to embark in a transparent manner on various PPP modalities. In this connection, the PPP process for three major projects in the areas of transport and telecommunications, as part of the CIP, has been launched in May 2018.

Data

The different stakeholders are fully aware of the need to develop the national statistical system. Indeed, a sound statistical system is not only needed for SDG progress reporting, but also to allow for informed decision making and effective monitoring. Going forward, Lebanon intends to start producing the data it needs to monitor and assess its progress towards the SDGs. As per the UN resolution 70/1, 'work will need to be undertaken to establish the baseline data where these are not yet available'.[175] Admittedly, this will be a challenging task for Lebanon, as the indicator framework requires extensive time and resources. Here, the support of the international community is needed and very much welcomed.

The SDGs present an opportunity for Lebanon to develop rights-based policies and systems by adopting Agenda 2030's universal, transformative and integrated approach. All this, while Lebanon continues to shoulder the economic, social and environmental burden of hosting 1.5 million discplaced from Syria. We hope that 2018 will mark a fresh start for Lebanon after a new parlaiment was elected, and with the support of the international community that was clearly demonstrated in the conferences that were recently held to support Lebanon's political, security, and economic stability.

VII

Annex1

National Consultations with Civil Society Organizations on the VNR for Lebanon

Introduction

The History of CSO's in Lebanon

Civil Society in Lebanon is one of the most active CSOs in the Middle East.[1] According to the definition of the World Bank "the term civil society organizations or CSOs refer to the wide array of nongovernmental and not-for-profit organizations that have a presence in public life and express the interests and values of their members or others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations."[2]

Lebanese CSOs include: NGOs, Ethnic, family, alumni or neighborhood associations, clubs (sports, cultural, artistic, etc.), federations, scouts, youth and students groups, local branches and foreign association, scientific and research centers, religious organizations, political parties, chambers of commerce, trade Unions, professional associations and cooperatives.

There is a long history about CSOs in Lebanon that dates back even before the born of the country which evolves out of a spirit of volunteerism.

CSOs history in Lebanon goes back to the arena of the Princedom of Mount Lebanon, in the sixteenth century[3].

The history and development of Civil Society Organizations in Lebanon can be divided into 4 main phases:

- The Ottoman Empire through the French Mandate, the early years of Independence until 1958: most of the CSO's in this period had a religious basis and focused on helping people in need and the poor.
- The Pre-war Period: under the presidency of 'Fouad Chehab' a Social Development plan was established. Due to this development plan, new associations were created that focused more on social justice, citizen participation, development and administrative decentralization for rural areas.
- The Civil War Period (1975-1990): during this period new roles for CSOs appeared filling in gaps that and state work. The first International NGOs entered in the arena during this period
- Post war till present: during the period focus was more related to human rights, public liberties, political rights and ecology. In 2008, Minister of Interior, signed the waited NGOs laws.

As a result of the Syrian crisis and its impact on Lebanon CSO's demonstrated their continuous big role in providing basic services to refugees as well as local communities. The international

1. The Development of Civil Society in Lebanon, FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO THE XXIST CENTURY: A DRIVER OF POLITICAL CHANGES? By Geoffroyd'Aspremont - Project Manager at the MEDEA Institutehttp://www.ldn-lb.org/details.aspx?id=822

2. Consultation with Civil Society, A Source Book working document February 2007, produced by Civil Society Team World Bank http://siteresources.worldbank.org/CSO/Resources/ConsultationsSourcebook_Feb2007.pdf

3. Mapping Civil Society Organizations In Lebanon, EU http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/lebanon/documents/news/20150416_2_en.pdf

community funding increased significantly by the end of 2013 with the increased number of Syrian refugees passing 1 million. In response to the need to address the crisis, international organizations have extended their support to CSOs working with refugees. This has led to a rapid increase in the work of CSOs without clear systems and internal procedures. This has weakened internal governance of CSOs and caused some to shift their focus from their original mission[4].

According to the latest records of the Ministry of Social affairs, by April 2014 there were 8311 civil society organizations registered and an additional 180 youth and sports clubs[5].

Initiatives taken by CSO's in Lebanon related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Millennium Development Goals (MDG)

The 2013-2014 Millennium Development Goals report demonstrate the importance of the initiatives taken by Lebanese CSOs even though most NGOs have dealt with the MDGs separately, depending on their sectors of engagement. For instance, the community Development Project funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Council for Development and reconstruction established partnerships with local NGOs and municipalities to deliver services in different fields. For example, the Ministry of Public Health cooperated with municipalities, NGOs and MOSA and that help for better results.; Some NGOs dealt with the MDG as an advocacy tool such as The Beirut-Based Arab NGOs Network for Development[6].

In addition to their work in emergency response, CSOs in Lebanon considered the social development goals, as part of their work for several reasons. The direct response to the needs of the communities was a major goal taken by these associations. The second reason is providing a more sustainable response, with a greater impact that emergency. In addition, this type of project got a great success among the donors, which saw in the sustainable work a concrete solution for the needs of the communities, especially within a very centralized system in Lebanon, where far regions enjoy poor access to services, jobs and sometimes education.

Through its different programs that are covering all the goals, many NGOs are working on SDGs. Unfortunately, there is a big gap between the information published about the SDGs projects and the amount of work on the ground. NGOs should work more on publishing reports on their work. Most of the reports remain internal and are not public to researchers. The information on their website is also very limited and is more oriented to the mass; Facebook, Instagram and other social media tools.

As a conclusion to the conducted desk review, CSOs in Lebanon needs to strengthen their work and cooperation with each other to avoid duplication of work and should be more effective in the society. They should publish more and they should have regular publication for a better follow up and more transparency. CSOs form an important part of Lebanon's democratic role, and they can continue to extend their capacity and impact as long as they maintain the elements necessary for good governance.

Lebanon's journey to the implementation of the SDGs

In September 2015 Lebanon endorsed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As part of the national process to implement the SDG, the Council of Ministers issued a decree in June

4. Slaiby 1994
Mapping Civil Society Organizations In Lebanon, EU http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/lebanon/documents/news/20150416_2_en.pdf

5. Mapping Civil Society Organizations in Lebanon 2015

6. Lebanon Millennium Development Goals Report 2013-2014

2017 #69 establishing an inter-ministerial National Committee for enhanced coordination to implement the 2030 agenda and SDGs . The committee is composed of 34 public institutions, 2 representatives from the private sector and 2 from the civil society (Caritas Lebanon and Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development) to lead the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development in Lebanon

The functions of the committee are to:

- Coordinate national efforts for the implementation of the sustainable development goals
- Integrate sustainable development goals into national programs and plans for sustainable development
- Contribute to spreading awareness about the objectives of sustainable development goals and the importance of achieving them
- Develop a national evidence base data for indicators of sustainable development goals
- Contribute to the preparation of the voluntary national report on the progress towards implementing the sustainable development goals to be submitted to the UN on a permanent basis

Afterwords, several workshops and meetings were organized which demonstrate that the Lebanese Government is strongly committed to engaging all stakeholders in implementing the SDG, hearing their challenges and needs, visions and priorities so that no one will be left behind from Lebanon's SDG strategy and to ensure sustainable development in Lebanon. Among others these workshops and meetings include:

- A workshop with the cooperation of the General Secretariat of the Lebanese Parliament on the role of the Lebanese Parliament in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Lebanon. [7]
- A national conference "Lebanon Collaboration for Sustainable Development Goals" organized at AUB with the collaboration of the Global Compact Network Lebanon on Lebanon's collaboration for the SDG that showcases various ongoing efforts and partnerships in relation to the SDG goals amongst the private sector, public sector, and civil society that demonstrate the crucial role of business in advancing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[8]
- A multi-stakeholder national dialogue on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Lebanon organized by the Arab NGO Network for Development, and the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at the American University of Beirut, in collaboration with the Lebanese Observatory for the Rights of Workers and Employees, the Lebanese Trade Union Training Center, Mouvement Social, and the Lebanese Transparency Association[9].
- Workshops implemented by the Arab NGO Network for Development in collaboration with the Issam Fares, Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs which focused on the obstacles and challenges for the implementation of the 2030 agenda. As well as a report that highlights major policy gaps that have also been identified in this report including the need to review outdated socio-economic policies such as those related to taxation, social protection, employment etc.

7. http://www.lb.undp.org/content/lebanon/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/10/17/the-parliament-and-the-journey-to-the-implementation-of-sdgs-in-lebanon.html

8. http://website.aub.edu.lb/news/2016/Pages/sdg.aspx

9. http://www.socialwatch.org/node/17792

- The academia through universities and schools who played a role in raising awareness on the SDG's
- In addition, CSO's also participated and were consulted by the Prime Minister's Office prior to CEDRE (March 19th, 2018) and Brussels (April 18th, 2018) conferences. This platform aimed to inform CSO's about Lebanon's objective from the conferences and give them a place to raise questions and get engaged in the process. Moreover, several CSO's actually participated in the Brussels conference.

Objectives of the National consultation on VNR:

A project between the Lebanese Government and UNDP was established to undergo a gap analysis and be the main base for the VNR.

In first quarter of 2018 both Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Development and Caritas Lebanon facilitated some sharing of experiences sessions, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

In this regard several national consultations were conducted among various stakeholders including the civil society actors. CSO's have been working in Lebanon much before its independence and continue to play a proactive role in raising awareness and mainstreaming the 2030 Agenda. Based on the above Caritas Lebanon and Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development conducted national consultation on the VNR with over 300 representative CSO's across Lebanon with the objective of:

- Raising awareness on the VNR and HLPF process and on the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs among civil society.
- Drafting a contribution to the VNR by stakeholders including civil society actors to be presented to the members of the National Committee for inclusion in the VNR.
- Defining an inclusive follow up process for the civil society actors to engage in the implementation of the agenda 2030, monitor the progress of the SDGs and provide support to the national committee through the 2 CSO representatives

National CSO Consultation Methodology

Identification of major stakeholders per region working SDG thematic goals: through desk review and linkages with CSO's, local authorities and partners over 1,000 CSO's were identified and invited to participate in the national consultation
Face to face Consultation through the implementation of onsite workshops in four regions across Lebanon. The selection criteria for the 300 CSO's was based on sampling by region, sector, working area, size of CSO, representation so as not to leave any type of CSO behind.
Setting CSO priorities challenges and recommendations or way forward: based on the 5Ps of the SDG's: Planet, People, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership

Main findings, recommendations and way forward

Key Priorities: poverty eradication; upgrading public sector education; reducing unemployment especially among the youth; upgrading and enhancing critical infrastructure; conserving natural resources (supporting sustainable agriculture, addressing and solving once and for all waste and waste water crisis; sustainable cities; addressing the impacts of the Syrian crisis on sustainable development
Key Priority Goals that need to be addressed as set by regions
North and Akkar: Eradicating poverty, conserving green cover and supporting farmers, upgrading and enhancing infrastructure, need for decentralization

Beirut and Mount Lebanon: Gender equality, waste and waste water crisis, environmental conservation, enhancing employment opportunities
Bekaa: Enhancing infrastructure, decentralization, environmental conservation especially addressing Litani River pollution, enhancing public education and addressing unemployment
South: Empowering and engaging youth, addressing unemployment, enhancing public sector education, enhancing good citizenship, public recruitment and employment to be based on capabilities

Key challenges: corruption and lack of transparency and good governance in public institutions, sectarianism, law enforcement, outdated legislation, centralization, access to data, impacts of the Syrian crisis, absence of comprehensive social protection strategy especially regarding the most vulnerable,

Key recommendations:

-Address corruption and enhance transparency and accountability within public institutions and moving forward towards an e-government that supports this endeavor along with access to information and ensure that employment within public institutions is based on capabilities and not sectarianism or political affiliations.

- All SDG strategies, programs and projects need to be context based on local and national priorities and needs

- Raise awareness on good citizenship is essential to ensure active engagement and local ownership of any SDG result

- Protect the environment especially in relation to waste and waste water remains is essential to safeguard Lebanon's natural resources and ensure basic rights to a healthy living. Further support farmers through sustainable agriculture is a necessity

- Support most vulnerable segments through the development and implementation of a comprehensive social protection strategy and plan

- Address unemployment especially among the youth and in rural areas affected by the impacts of the Syrian crisis

-Upgrade the educational system and infrastructure

- Enhance the capacities of decision makers including ministers, parliamentarians, mayors on the SDG goals so they can integrate them in development planning

- Actively engage CSO's throughout the development and implementation of the SDG goals

- Update legislations and policies and ensure law enforcement

- Proceed with decentralization reforms at the local level especially at the municipal level to support implementing the SDG goals

Workshops Major Findings	
Planet	
Key Priorities	**Major Challenges**
Environmental Conservation and biodiversity **Sustainable agriculture and food security** **Climate change and renewable Energy** **Support sustainable and green cities**	Corruption within public institutions especially ministries Agriculture sector in Lebanon : having highest rate of poverty, lack of basic services to farmers including access to health services and social security, lack of adequate infrastructure etc. Lack of awareness on responsible consumption Governments do not involve or engage CSO's in decision making

Recommendation

- Enhance accountability eliminate corruption and increase law enforcement (enforcement of environmental law and the activation of the role of environmental attorney generals and judicial control)

- Actively engage CSO's in development of environmental policies

- Implement sustainable waste management and waste water strategy that are in line with international standards (SOLVE Waste problem)

Environmental Conservation and biodiversity: Protect natural water resources from environmental degradation especially the Litani river; Protect and increase green cover; Encourage rural development and tourism; Support development and protection of HIMA's which refers to an area set aside for the conservation of natural capital, typically fields, wildlife and forests); Raise awareness on conservation of natural resources; Include environment in educational curriculums; Implement environmental impact assessment to all projects

Sustainable agriculture and food security: Increase government budget in agriculture sector; Develop and implement suitable policies to support farmers; Empower women to actively participate in agriculture field; Support cooperatives; Enhance agricultural value chain; Monitor and inspect food safety; Raise awareness on responsible consumption

Climate change and renewable energy: Integrate climate change adaptation within policies and projects; Implement National strategy on renewable energy

People	
Key Priorities	**Major Challenges**
Poverty is a cross cutting theme related to most of the SDG goals **Reducing poverty and inequality** **Good health and wellbeing** **Right to quality education for all** **Reduce gender inequalities** **Reduce unemployment and increase access to jobs**	Lack of comprehensive national strategy to reduce poverty Lack of transparency and increased corruption in the public sector institutions Lack of appropriate social protection and health services for vulnerable communities especially the elderly and disabled Constraints for unregistered Lebanese segments of the population Weak and lack support to public schools and infrastructure to schools Weak regional coverage of essential health services Weak Medical supervision Weakcontrol and monitoring in the government Despite law regarding access to information however there is not implementation MoSA budget to support social protection for CSO's is not sufficient

Recommendation

- Ensure basic social services to all especially health, education and shelter especially most vulnerable
- Enhance transparency mechanisms within public sector institutions : decentralization, e-government
- Amendment/update of personal status law by finding solutions to unregistered people and integrate them in the society through socio economic support mainly job creation and empowerment
- Encourage volunteer work and make use of local skills (NVSP program)

Reducing poverty and inequality: Develop a national comprehensive strategy to eradicate poverty with the active participation of CSO's; Support most vulnerable communities and segments including women, farmers, children (reduce children drop out of schools)

Good health and wellbeing: Ensure and implement comprehensive health care system for all especially vulnerable communities; Increase number and access to primary health care system across the country; Invest in public hospitals: infrastructure, capacities, budget and service coverage and reduce budget for private sector hospitals as a means to reducing corruption and enhancing development

Right to quality education for all: Invest in public schools : infrastructure, quality of education, budget and service coverage and number of student enrolment and reduce budget for private sector schools as a means to reducing corruption and enhancing development; Reduce school drop out by making all public schools free of charge till at least the age of 12 or 15; Implement social service plan in schools to be focused on an annual basis on the SDG goals

Reduce gender inequalities: Enhance gender equality at all levels especially through the active participation of women in political and economic spheres.

Reduce unemployment and increase access to jobs: Increase jobs in rural areas; Adopt principle of efficiency and capacities in employment in the public sector away from politics, sectarianism and corruption

Peace	
Key Priorities	**Major Challenges**
Peace and rule of law **Empowerment of institutions** **Social and economic rights** **Conflict resolution**	Sectarianism Lack of good citizenship Corruption within public institutions Security instability in Lebanon and the region Monitoring of the implementation articles of the human rights declaration adopted by Lebanon

Recommendation

- Ensure access to justice for all
- Eliminate sectarianism and work on gender equality in all its dimensions
- Ensure access to information
- Increase number of population that feel safety in living in Lebanon walking around etc.
- Integrate peacebuilding culture within educational curriculums
- Enhance peaceful solutions to conflicts and enhance social cohesion
- Solve problem of armed conflicts especially among citizens by organizing usage of guns among people and enhance culture of peace
- Develop and implement good citizenship and civic engagement through educational curriculum, military service

Partnership	
Key Priorities	**Major Challenges**
Cooperation with international agencies and countries **Increase coordination between CSO and public institutions** **All partnerships should be context based on national priorities and strategies**	Sectarianism Lack of implementation of international partnership agreements Weak linkages between public, private , cso's, academia etc.

Recommendation

Develop and implement national development strategy to support partnerships among local and international stakeholders

Work with international developed North countries to support Lebanon to implement international conventions adopted by Lebanon that necessitate financing, capabilities, knowhow etc.

Encourage Public Private Partnerships and investments as a means to direct investments to the implementation of the SDG goals and to enhance the quality of services

Encourage the private sector to engage in corporate social responsibility to support CSO's working on SDG goals and provide incentives for private sector through tax reduction

Enhance access to information to reduce corruption and increase transparency and support from international agencies and institutions

Enhance work on E-government

Prosperity	
Key Priorities	**Major Challenges**
Responsible consumption **Economic Growth** **Partnership**	Lack of Good governance Lack of comprehensive national economic strategy Absence of career guidance and job matching within schools and technical and vocational institutions Inadequate infrastructure which impedes investments and economic growth and prosperity Security instability High level of unemployment and increased job competition especially among youth and vulnerable segments

Recommendation

- Develop and implement comprehensive national strategy for development
- Enhance the work of the Ministry of Planning
- Promote economic and trade exchange and support MSME's
- Enhance critical infrastructure across the country and in rural areas including road network, internet
- Support local economic development
- Review trade policies
- Encourage innovation tools for economic development
- Develop strategy for sustainable cities
- Reduce brain drain and develop projects that encourage diaspora to invest in Lebanon
- Implement adequate decentralization
- Ensure access to information
- Increase job opportunities especially for the youth and in developing green jobs

Conclusion, challenges and limitations

The CSO's national consultations process was successful since it captured and reflected CSO's work, challenges and recommendations to support the implementation of SDG's in Lebanon. Meanwhile the process had its limitations and challenges. With over 8000 CSO's registered in the country, the major challenges were lack of a unified CSO database, wrong contact details, lack of any classification criteria for CSO's, outdated data, time constraints. From this perspective there is a recommendation for concerned ministries to update and share information on CSO's in Lebanon, more important is the need to classify CSO's by specialization, areas of work, size and network among each other to avoid duplication of work so that in the future the impact and support they provide can be measure and hence supported. Moreover, there is a need to provide CSO's with accreditation and further support to achieve their objectives.

This report reflects CSO's challenges and aspirations, as described above there is a strong need to tackle corruption, advance in the development of sound policies, enforce laws and implement sustainable strategies that leaves no one behind hence the necessity for decentralization. Further CSO's raised the voice on the impacts of the Syrian crisis especially in vulnerable regions and the need to invest in infrastructure, economy, and people while protecting the environment.

As a final note, Lebanon's CSOs are a major pillar for progress and sustainable development, as they continue to bring about citizen's voices to national agendas and strategies. Lebanese CSO's continue to work with and support governments in implementing their agendas, delivering services, holding governments accountable to their commitments, and advocating for change, including around the SDGs. As such it is a necessityto integrate their voice, partnership, challenges and recommendations within the VNR and the SDG national strategy.

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43. This rate has been estimated at 19% in 2010.

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49. 'Interview with Ministry of Energy and Water'.

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51. Target 7.3

52. Target 7.2

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58. 'News | Lebanese Petroleum Administration' <http://www.lpa.gov.lb/news2018.php> [accessed 26 February 2018].

59. Examples include decrees 8471 of 2012 on the environmental compliance of industrial establishments; decree 8633 of 2012 concerning Fundamentals of Environmental Impact Assessment; decree 167 of 2017 on economic incentives for environmental protection; and others.

60. Which responds directly to SDG Target 12.1

61. SDG 12 Targets 12.4 and 12.5

62. Target 12.4

63. Lebanon is party to namely the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal of 1989, the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants of 2001, and the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade of 2004.

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75. Target 13.1

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