



National Statement of **Lebanon**

at the

Economic and Social Council (**ECOSOC**)

**Humanitarian Affairs Segment** (HAS)

“Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance to Face the Challenges of 2021  
and Beyond: Mobilizing Respect for International Humanitarian law,  
Inclusion, Gender, Innovation and Partnerships”

June 23-25, 2021

*Check Against Delivery*

***Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations  
866 United Nations Plaza, Suite 531, New York, NY 10017***

**Ms. Pascale Baeriswyl**, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN  
Vice-President of ECOSOC and Chair of the Humanitarian Affairs Segment

At the outset, allow me to thank you for your capable leadership as President of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment and for the organization of this year's session in a hybrid format.

I would also like to thank the co-facilitators, Indonesia, and Switzerland for ably conducting the negotiations of the annual resolution entitled "*Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations*".

Madam President,

This year's Humanitarian Affairs Segment comes at a critical time of unprecedented challenges for the world.

For my country Lebanon in particular, the situation is drastically deteriorating, with Lebanon trying to face unprecedented and compounded challenges: an economic turmoil, a financial crisis, the coronavirus pandemic, the Syrian displaced crisis, and the Beirut port blast.

According to the latest World Bank report on Lebanon, released earlier this month, the economic and financial crisis is likely to rank in the top 10, possibly top 3, most severe crises episodes globally since the mid-nineteenth century.

Today, more than half the population is below the national poverty line and the unemployment rate is on the rise, with the Lebanese pound losing more than 90% of its value. More and more Lebanese households are unable to afford basic services like food, health, electricity, water, Internet, and education. The public health system is stretched beyond its limits with growing shortages of important medicines and medical supplies. The education sector has also been hit. This school year alone, 54,000 students transitioned from private to public schools, as many parents can no longer afford private education for their children, putting additional strain on the public education sector, with teachers' salary losing 90% of its value.

Madam President,

As the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, Deputy Special Coordinator **Najat Rochdi** stated earlier this month "*the UN estimates that over the next eight months around \$300 million is needed to provide vital aid to around 1.5 million Lebanese and 400,000 migrant workers living there*".

Madam President,

As Lebanon endures one of its worst financial and economic crises ever, Lebanon remains the country hosting the largest number of displaced per capita, with over 1.5 million Syrian displaced on its territory, a number that amounts to one-third of its population. Unfortunately, the multiple crisis, exacerbated by COVID 19 pandemic, have created a humanitarian tragedy, and have spelled disastrous implications for everyone, Lebanese citizens and Syrian displaced. According to the latest UN survey: nine out of 10 Syrian refugees are falling below the extreme poverty line – a 60 % increase since 2019.

Although Lebanon is not a state party to the 1951 Convention, it has been playing a positive role in ensuring the protection of all displaced in particular by upholding the principle of non-refoulement.

Stressing that Lebanon can no longer bear the brunt of the displacement crisis, especially in these unprecedented times, we reiterate our repeated calls for the safe and dignified return of the displaced, and we stress that Lebanon is not an asylum country and that our Constitution rejects any form of settlement or integration.

In this context, and with reference to pp4 ter of this year's resolution, we reiterate the position of the G77 and China that was reflected in the official letter sent by the Chair of the group<sup>1</sup> where it is clearly stated that *“the Group wishes to clarify, therefore, that it does not consider the latter part of “PP4 ter” (from “and also recognizing” onwards) to be agreed language or to constitute a precedent for future multilaterally negotiated texts.”*

Lebanon stresses that the framework for cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, should be coordinated with Member States hosting these actors' activities, while supporting national priorities and respecting humanitarian principles, and reiterates its rejection for any form of local integration of the displaced and refugees.

Madam President,

As COVID 19 remains a global challenge, Lebanon believes it must be addressed through solidarity and cooperation. In that field, Lebanon is proud to have been the initiator of the ***“Political declaration on the equitable global access to covid 19 vaccines”*** that was endorsed by 182 delegations.

Genuinely believing that *“No one is safe until everyone is safe”*, Lebanon has committed in its national vaccination plan, to vaccinate alongside national citizens, Syrian displaced and Palestinian refugees, and we call on United Nations agencies and other stakeholders to support us in that endeavor.

In this arena, Lebanon commends the reference in this year's resolution to *“the importance of inclusive national vaccination programs covering displaced persons, migrants, and refugees, and encourages United Nations agencies and other relevant stakeholders to support Member States, in full coordination with their national government.”*

Madam President,

As our world in general and our country Lebanon specifically is increasingly facing complex crisis, multilateralism is key. A united global response is vital to face the profound and growing humanitarian needs and sufferings.

At this critical time, Lebanon needs its friends and partners. We thank the United Nations and donors for their continuous support, and we call on them to stand by our side to help us mitigate the impact of these unprecedented challenges, and to focus on recovery efforts to build back better.

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<sup>1</sup> Letter sent by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Guinea to the United Nations, His Excellency **Mr. Aly Diane** to the President and the Vice-President of the ECOSOC on Friday 11 June 2021.