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Independent Monitor's Report

Lebanon Commitments from the London
and Brussels Conferences

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Foreword

This report presents the second Independent Monitor's Assessment by Agulhas Applied Knowledge and the third report in total being undertaken of the commitments made by the Government of Lebanon and the International Community at the London conference in 2016 and at subsequent Brussels meetings in 2017, 2018 and 2019. It covers data for the full year 2019 with a narrative update to March 2020. It is a backward-looking assessment and, as such, does not fully reflect the new situation created by the COVID-19 crisis, which will need to be addressed in future monitoring reports.

Introduction

International partners have organised a number of conferences mobilising support for Syria and the region since the onset of the crisis. In February 2016, the "Supporting Syria and the region" conference was held in London. Since 2017 the conference "Supporting the future of Syria and the region", which is hosted by the European Union and co-chaired by the United Nations, has been held in Brussels annually in April 2017, April 2018 and March 2019.¹ At these conferences, the international community and Lebanon have come together to reaffirm their commitments to help affected Syrian refugees and the communities hosting them. Recognising the challenges of this protracted crisis and the need to coordinate on humanitarian and development aid, discussions at the conferences have focused on protection, economic growth and development, livelihoods, education and health and included political commitments in addition to financial pledges. The Brussels III Conference in 2019 produced a final declaration, which reinforced the commitments made at previous meetings. Specifically, the Co-chairs and main donors agreed to "widen the resource base and ensure greater predictability, coherence and effectiveness of the aid"². However, no new commitments were agreed on.

At the second Brussels conference April 2018, the Government of Lebanon and the international partners **committed to monitoring and evaluation of the commitments made at the conferences to ensure follow up**. This commitment to progress reporting was reiterated at the Brussels III conference in 2019.

This monitoring process aims to create collective accountability through two phases: Phase I involves the development of the monitoring framework, and Phase II comprises tracking and

¹ These conferences are generally referred to as the London conference and the Brussels I, II and III conferences. This report also adopts this terminology.

² "Supporting the future of Syria and the region" Brussels III conference 12-14 March 2019, *Brussels III Conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region': co-chairs declaration*, Article 4.

reporting on progress twice annually. The Government of Lebanon (GoL) and its partners have collaboratively developed a draft “Brussels Conference Monitoring Framework” for Lebanon, which has elaborated benchmarks and indicators for each commitment set out in the Lebanon Partnership Paper presented at the Brussels II conference. In its current state, the monitoring framework also includes commitments pertaining to economic development and livelihoods from the London and Brussels I conferences in the annex. The monitoring framework provides the basis for mutual accountability. The Government of Lebanon has, as its pledge to the Global Refugee Forum, reaffirmed its commitments expressed at the Brussels conferences and in the joint monitoring framework. Finalisation of the framework is expected during the next few months.

The present report is an independent monitoring report to review progress and challenges in terms of delivering on the commitments for Lebanon made at these conferences, and thus forms part of the second phase. This report focuses on updates and trends related to the commitments during 2019, and is being prepared for the upcoming Brussels IV conference at the end of June 2020. The findings regarding progress against the Brussels Commitments are also intended to be presented to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) governance structures on a regular basis, but this has not yet happened.

As relevant context to the adherence to the commitments during 2019, it should be noted that the past year has been a turbulent year for Lebanon in economic and political terms. 2020 is to date even more challenging. On 31 January 2019, a new Lebanese government was formed, headed by Prime Minister Saad Hariri after nine months of negotiations. On 2 September 2019, President Michel Aoun, Prime Minister Saad Hariri and Speaker of the Parliament Nabih Berri declared “the state of economic emergency” in Lebanon.³ In October widespread protests began across Lebanon in reaction to the social and economic crisis and calling for changes in the governance of Lebanon including the resignation of the Prime Minister, Saad Hariri. Hariri resigned at the end of October 2019, however a new Government was not formed until late January 2020, after three months of mass protests and political deadlock. The Government of Lebanon’s (GoL) attention is now focussed on the economic crisis. Lebanon is facing a chronic balance of payments deficit⁴, a high level of public debt (150.3% of GDP) and a fiscal deficit of 11.5% of GDP by the end of 2018⁵ as well as rapidly dwindling dollar reserves. Thus, on 13 February 2020 Lebanese officials agreed to form a committee that will meet with local and international experts to draw up a rescue plan, which has not yet materialised. On 9 March 2020, Lebanon defaulted on a USD 1.2 billion Eurobond, the first default on sovereign debt in its history. The current COVID-19 crisis further exacerbates Lebanon’s economic and financial woes. The economic crisis has had major repercussions on achieving the commitments.

³ The Daily Star (3 September 2019): *Lebanon declares ‘state of economic emergency’*, [link](#).

⁴ Balance of payments and international investment position statistics, January 2020, IMF, [link](#).

⁵ World Bank (2019): *Lebanon’s Economic Update – April 2019*, [link](#).

While regulatory improvements have been made with regards to access to legal residency and civil documentation, the number of Syrian refugees with legal residency in Lebanon has been decreasing over the past years and this trend continued in 2019. Furthermore, the implementation of the April 2019 Higher Defense Council (HDC) decision regarding deportations, demolitions and foreign labour have further worsened the protection space leading to self-imposed movement restrictions by refugees. As the 2020 update of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) highlighted, “[p]ersons displaced from Syria, in particular those without legal residency, including children, face increasing risk of arrest and deportation since the Higher Defence Council decisions in April 2019”⁶. This has also increased barriers to accessing public services, such as health and education, and to livelihoods opportunities.

The economic crisis further aggravated the already precarious situation of vulnerable Lebanese and refugees from Syria, in particular with regards to food security, shelter, water and sanitation, and health care. The exacerbated vulnerabilities bring about a heightened risk of the affected population having to resort to negative coping mechanisms, such as child labour, child marriage, school drop-out, and exploitation and abuse.⁷

As Lebanon's economic and fiscal crisis is unfolding, a continuous negative daily impact on the society. In parallel, with the outbreak of COVID-19, the health crisis and prolonged lockdown is deepening the economic contraction even further. The compounded crisis has led to devastating effects on economic activity and growing poverty levels in the country. The health crisis is expected to become severe, with at least a million having no access to health care. There is a shortage of functioning respiratory equipment and intensive care capacity and social protection is chronically under-resourced and seriously threatened. About 220,000 citizens are estimated to have lost their jobs in the past six months, and this number is expected to rise significantly with the current economic paralysis. Lebanon has limited means to revitalize the economy or provide a safety net for the most vulnerable. The imminent concern for the most vulnerable including the Syrian refugees, is linked with the expectation that the COVID-19 outbreak will negatively impact relations between refugees and host communities.

Although this report monitors achievements in 2019, we acknowledge that Lebanon is now entering an uncertain and challenging period in which partnership with international community will be of critical performance and many priorities will have to be reassessed in order to address the pandemic. In terms of the overall assessment in this report, many gains and points of progress are threatened by COVID-19, particularly in relation to economic activity and health. As noted in the Foreword, this will need to be fully addressed in future monitoring reports.

⁶ Government of Lebanon and UN (2020): *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017 – 2020. 2020 Update*, page 16. [link](#)

⁷ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2019): *Situational update on the current operational environment in Lebanon – 20 Dec 2019*.

Delivery of Financial Pledges

The bi-annual “Supporting Syria and the region: Post-Brussels conference financial tracking” report is commissioned by the European Commission as part of its commitment to track financial commitments made at the Brussels conferences. It records continued and substantial levels of external grant funding to Lebanon from 2016 to 2018 which show that the donor community has exceeded⁸ its commitments made at the London and subsequent Brussels conferences. According to these reports, significantly more grant funding has been disbursed, contracted or committed by donors to Lebanon than was pledged exclusively for Lebanon in 2018 and 2019. Also the volume of this grant funding increased from USD 1.16 billion in 2018 to USD 1.59 billion in 2019.⁹ Grant contributions that have been made available to the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) have been relatively stable since 2016, increasing from USD 1.09 billion in 2018 to USD 1.23 billion in 2019. The LCRP financing has now exceeded half of the annual appeal taking into account carry-overs from the previous years, reaching 55% in 2019.¹⁰ Predictable multi-year contributions increased considerably from 30% in 2018 to 41% (or USD 511 million for projects that have a duration of 24 months or longer) in 2019.¹¹ However, according to the Post-Brussels conference financial tracking report, multi-annual funding has fallen short of the corresponding pledges in the past two years.¹²

In 2019, 4% of the total funding for the LCRP was allocated to national Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), 16% to international NGOs and the rest to the United Nations and its agencies.

With regards to the **Brussels I conference commitment “to find creative/innovative funding sources”**, progress has been made in deploying and upscaling pioneering funding sources with a particular focus on bridging the humanitarian-development aid nexus. The EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis investments in Lebanon increased from approximately EUR 521 million by February 2019 to about Euro 750 million by February 2020. A further substantial increase of nearly Euro 170 million is expected by the end of March 2020.¹³

The World Bank managed Global Concessional Financing Facility (GCFF) is providing loans on concessional terms to support Lebanon in dealing with the additional burden of sheltering

⁸ Given that most financial pledges are made at a regional, multi-country or not defined level and not at country level, it is impossible to verify to which exact degree pledges were upheld. This statement refers to estimations of pledges made to Lebanon. See also Press release: *Brussels III Conference on ‘Supporting the future of Syria and the region’: co-chairs declaration*, Council of the EU, 14 March 2019, welcoming “the delivery by the international community of funds well in excess of pledges made at Brussels II in 2018”. (point 4)

⁹ Development Initiatives (March 2019 and March 2020): *Supporting Syria and the region: Post-Brussels conference financial tracking. Report Seven and Report Nine* (Report Nine is an unpublished draft)

¹⁰ Lebanon Inter-Agency Coordination (2019): *LCRP 2019 End Year Funding Update*, [link](#).

¹¹ Information provided by the Lebanon UN Inter-Agency Coordination Team, February 2019 and March 2020.

¹² Development Initiatives (March 2019 and March 2020): *Supporting Syria and the region: Post-Brussels conference financial tracking. Report Seven and Report Nine* (Report Nine is an unpublished draft)

¹³ Information provided by the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Lebanon in February 2019 and 2020.

Syrians. The GCFE currently has a portfolio of three active loan-funded projects for Lebanon, mobilising a total of USD 615 million.¹⁴ Overall, and beyond the GCFE, the availability of loans for Lebanon has exceeded pledges made in the past two years. However, some loans have been suspended and others, for example related to health, have yet to be disbursed.

Protection

From 2016 to 2018 the Government of Lebanon made improvements to regulations regarding the legal residency of Syrian refugees, such as introducing a fee waiver for certain categories of Syrians. However, the protection space deteriorated during 2019 particularly following the April 2019 Higher Defence Council (HDC) decision regarding deportations, demolitions and foreign labour. As the most recent update of the LCRP notes, in particular persons displaced from Syria without legal residency, including children, have been increasingly at risk of arrest and deportation since the Higher Defence Council decisions in April 2019.¹⁵ This shrinking protection space hampers freedom of movement and thus restricts the access of refugees to education, healthcare and livelihoods opportunities. Since mid-October, movement has been further limited due to the increased presence of checkpoints and the potential for clashes, as well as increased transportation costs.¹⁶

The economic crisis has had particularly negative repercussions for child protection. Already vulnerable groups of children are at even greater risk of violence, exploitation, and abuse as households struggle to meet soaring household costs and thus resort to negative coping mechanisms. The absence of child protection services, in particular for those residing in informal tented settlements (ITS), further aggravates this situation. Preliminary vulnerability assessments with refugee households highlight that child labour is likely to increase beyond already concerning pre-crisis levels reaching 65% in some areas of the Bekaa¹⁷, which in turn is likely to result in increased school or informal learning drop-outs. Young and adolescent girls are particularly at risk to violence, abuse, and gender-based violence including early forced marriage as the vulnerability of households increases.

There has been a decrease in **resettlement** allocations since 2016, with a slight increase again in 2019. In 2019 about 9,600 places were made available by resettlement countries to Syrian refugees in Lebanon, compared to approximately 23,500 in 2016 and 7,800 in 2018. Over 7,400 persons departed for resettlement in 2019.¹⁸ This overall decrease in resettlement

¹⁴ World Bank (2019): *Global Financing Facility 2019 Annual Report*, [link](#)

¹⁵ Government of Lebanon and UN (2020): *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017 – 2020. 2020 Update*, [link](#)

¹⁶ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2020): *Inter-Agency Situational Update on the Current Operational Environment in Lebanon – Feb 2020*.

¹⁷ Habib, R. R. (2019): *Survey on Child Labour in Agriculture in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon: The Case of Syrian Refugees*. Beirut, Lebanon: American University of Beirut Press, [link](#).

¹⁸ Data from UNHCR, February 2020.

opportunities over the past four years carries negative implications for the 11% of Syrian refugees who have no intention of returning to Syria.¹⁹ It is projected for 2020 that 111,400 refugees in Lebanon will require resettlement and total pledges from 13 countries currently stand at 8,445 places.²⁰

The Government of Lebanon has continuously reaffirmed its commitment to the **principle of non-refoulement**. This principle requires an independent judicial or administrative review of each case before a decision on deportation is taken and executed. The national law provides for such a court review, but it is not yet implemented in the current practice of deportations to Syria.²¹ According to the latest update of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), “[f]ollowing decisions by the HDC and the Directorate General of General Security (GSO) in April and May 2019, displaced Syrians and Palestinian refugees from Syria –men, women and children– apprehended for lack of legal residency and found to have entered Lebanon irregularly after 24 April 2019 are subject to deportation and handed over to the Syrian immigration authorities. Discussions are ongoing between the authorities and partners about securing procedural safeguards to eliminate the risk of refoulement while ensuring effective border management.”²² Indeed, the GSO published a statement in the media stating that 2,731 Syrians were deported between May and August 2019²³. Deportations have continued since August last year.

The number of known **returns** has steadily increased since 2016 with over 24,000 refugees returning from Lebanon to Syria in 2019 either on their own or as part of group movements, including those facilitated by the General Security Office (GSO). While the number of returns continues to increase, the total number of people who returned since 2016 constitutes less than 4% of all refugees from Syria in Lebanon.²⁴

For Syrian refugees staying in Lebanon, the Government of Lebanon has taken numerous steps towards increasing access to **legal residency** including reducing associated costs. However, the number of Syrians without legal residency has been continuously increasing, despite improvements to the regulations. Only 22% of individuals aged 15 years and above had legal residency in 2019, compared to 27% in 2018.²⁵ Reasons for this decline include:

- differing levels of implementation of the fee waiver;

¹⁹ UNHCR (May 2019): *Still longing to go home in safety and dignity*.

²⁰ Data obtained from notes of the Lebanon DSG meeting on 3rd March 2020.

²¹ The Legal Agenda (2019): *Position Paper on the decision to summarily deport Syrian nationals who entered Lebanon irregularly*. Position paper endorsed by eight Lebanese civil society organisations, [link](#).

²² Government of Lebanon and UN (2020): *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017 – 2020. 2020 Update*, page 12. [link](#)

²³ Daily Star (2019): *More than 2,700 Syrians deported from Lebanon under new rule*, [link](#)

²⁴ UNHCR (2020): *Return trends 2019*. Presentation at the National Protection Working Group (PWG) on 21 February 2020.

²⁵ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2019): *VASyR 2019. Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*.

- having previously renewed residency based on sponsorship and being unable to obtain a Lebanese sponsor or pay the fees;
- arriving after 2015; and
- concerns over arrest and detention on the way to GSO offices due to a lack of residency.²⁶

The **expansion of the residency fee waiver** has not been implemented to date and UNHCR could not resume the registration of refugees.

A positive trend has been witnessed regarding the increasing numbers of birth registrations, reflecting simplified **birth and marriage registration** procedures. In 2019, 97% of all children born in Lebanon had a doctor's or midwife's certificate, and 30% were registered with the Foreigners' Registry, compared to 21% in 2018.²⁷

Nevertheless, progress on the generation and publication of **accurate data and statistics** has been limited. This is particularly a constraint in regard to increasing the number of those with legal residency, given the unavailability of official statistics on how many have applied, and how many have been granted or rejected.

While there has been progress in putting mechanisms in place for monitoring and mitigation of tensions, recent developments and the absence of due process in many actions raises concerns on **upholding the rule of law**. This is in particular the case for the initial implementation of the April 2019 HDC decision, which included demolitions of unauthorised permanent structures in informal tented settlements, and the implementation of the Ministry of Labour (MoL) Policy Action against Illegal Foreign Employment on the Lebanese Territory in June 2019. In Aarsal alone over 4,400 structures were identified to be dismantled, 80% of which had already been demolished by September 2019.²⁸ In addition, structures were demolished in two sites in North Lebanon in July 2019²⁹ and by the end of August 2019, 464 hard structures had been demolished in Akkar affecting nearly 1,400 persons.³⁰

The MoL policy aimed at curbing undocumented foreign labour, published in June 2019, called on different state actors such as municipalities to support its implementation despite the lack of an official mandate. The plan contained 13 measures to combat unauthorised labour and gave a one-month deadline (until 9 July 2019) to acquire work permits. Given that in many

²⁶ Government of Lebanon and UN (2020): *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017 – 2020. 2020 Update*. [link](#)

²⁷ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2019): *VASyR 2019. Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon*.

²⁸ HC Donor Meeting, 8 September 2019: "Hard Structures Situation Update." Powerpoint presentation

²⁹ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, UNHCR, (2019): *Hard Structures Dismantlement Situation Reports, 5 July 2019*

³⁰ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, UNHCR, (2019): *Hard Structures Dismantlement Situation Reports, 24 August 2019*

cases of residencies based on sponsorship the employment relationship is limited³¹, the MoL policy on illegal foreign employment linking sponsorship with work permits could result in large decreases in Syrians with legal residencies based on sponsorship due to their inability to obtain work permits from a willing employer. The impact in this regard has yet to be seen. The implementation of the MoL initiative targeting undocumented foreign workers resulted in 834 fines, 197 warnings and 30 shops being closed by the end of August 2019. On the 3rd of September, another 30 shops were closed in Beirut.³²

Some 4,400 Syrian refugees were affected by collective evictions in 2019, marking a sharp decrease from over 8,000 persons in the previous year. However, there remained over 8,600 individuals at risk of collective evictions at the end of 2019.³³ In 2018 75% of eviction notices were carried out, which decreased to 49% in 2019. However, although the percentage of eviction notices being translated into action was lower in 2019, the overall number of actual collective evictions in 2019 was higher at 84 compared with 77 in 2018.³⁴ Updated data from the Lebanon Inter-Agency Team states that, based on eviction notices issued between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020, which have not been withdrawn or terminated, almost 12,000 individuals now remain at risk of collective eviction. Alongside the usual alleged reasons for eviction (inability to pay rent, tension with landlord etc.), public health and COVID-19 issues are now also an alleged reason for some evictions.³⁵

Curfews remained the most commonly reported security issue in 2019 with 14% of Syrian families being affected.³⁶ In January 2020, 330 municipalities had a curfew in place affecting Syrian and Palestinian refugees, while curfews can by law only be issued by the Supreme Military Council affecting all of Lebanon's population.³⁷

As a result of the current crisis, tensions are increasing between host community members and refugees, in particular due to increased competition over unskilled jobs and the higher cost of living.³⁸ Tensions may further increase as municipalities struggle to provide their services amid a holdback of the Independent Municipal Funds. Municipal funds for 2017 were only paid in 2019, and those for 2018 and 2019 are still outstanding. With Government revenues depleting in the context of the current economic crisis, this is unlikely to be resolved

³¹ It should be highlighted that work sponsorships do contain a clause urging the sponsor to seek to obtain a work *permit* for the sponsored Syrian.

³² Danish Refugee Council (2019): Ministry of Labour Plan Snapshot on Implementation July 2019 to September 3, 2019

³³ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, UNHCR (2020): *Collective Evictions and Eviction Notices. ActivityInfo report covering January – December 2019.*

³⁴ Data supplied by the Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon Team, April 2020.

³⁵ Data received from Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon on 30 April 2020. Data is for collective evictions involving five or more households only (individual/household evictions are not included).

³⁶ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2019): *VASyR 2019. Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon.*

³⁷ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2020): *Inter-Agency Situational Update on the Current Operational Environment in Lebanon – Feb 2020.*

³⁸ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2020): *Inter-Agency Situational Update on the Current Operational Environment in Lebanon – Feb 2020.*

in the near future. Disruption in the provision of services such as municipal police, solid waste management and other basic services are expected and these may even come to a complete halt, which would have ramifications for **social stability**.

Reforms for Economic Growth and Development (including Livelihoods)

With pre-existing structural weaknesses worsening, Lebanon slipped into a severe economic crisis in 2019, which has negatively affected employment levels with estimates suggesting that the total number of lost jobs since October reached 220,000 by early February 2020. 12% of surveyed companies ceased or suspended operations, one third reduced their workforce by 60%, and half reduced salaries by more than 40%.³⁹ Government revenues are estimated to have decreased by 40% during the fourth quarter of 2019.⁴⁰

At the London conference, the Government of Lebanon proposed interventions to create **job opportunities for both Lebanese and Syrians**. While the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) Livelihoods sector's funding level has nearly doubled since 2016⁴¹, job creation in the sector as well as programmes outside the LCRP have not been able to meet the increasing demands and have been hindered by aggravated structural weaknesses. Furthermore, the implementation of the MoL initiative targeting undocumented foreign workers resulted in numerous fines and shop closures with negative repercussions for poor and displaced families who were working informally, either within or outside the authorised sectors. In 2019, about 4,200 jobs were created or maintained as part of the LCRP, while supporting over 2,000 micro, small or medium-sized enterprises and thus not meeting the LCRP target of nearly 5,800 jobs.⁴²

Reflecting the Government of Lebanon's request to invest in **municipal infrastructure**, this investment rose sharply in 2018 and further increased to over USD 15.1 million in 2019. These investments have contributed to creating temporary employment for about 17,400 people.⁴³ The economic crisis and political situation have also had negative repercussions for vulnerable persons in accessing livelihood opportunities. As such, the number of persons employed through public infrastructure and environmental assets improvement decreased from 1,920 (January to September average) to 30 in October, 107 in November and 23 in December 2019, not taking into account seasonal fluctuations. The increased demand from Lebanese to be employed in such temporary employment initiatives has also been reported.⁴⁴ Despite this

³⁹ BusinessNews (7 February 2020): *220,000 jobs lost estimated by InfoPro*, [link](#).

⁴⁰ OCHA Lebanon (19 February 2020): *Lebanon Crisis monitoring dashboard – key indicators*. As of 19 February 2020.

⁴¹ Lebanon Inter-Agency Coordination (2019): *LCRP 2019 End Year Funding Update*. [Link](#).

⁴² Figures are from Livelihoods Sector ActivityInfo reports as per 5 March 2020

⁴³ Figures are from Livelihoods Sector ActivityInfo reports as per 5 March 2020

⁴⁴ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2020): *Inter-Agency Situational Update on the Current Operational Environment in Lebanon – Feb 2020*.

near stand-still in labour-intensive public works during the fourth quarter of 2019, the number of persons benefitting still exceeded the over 15,000 reported in 2018.

The low sustainable job creation numbers need to be seen in the context of an unfavourable business enabling environment⁴⁵. However, while the need for **reforms to stimulate economic growth** has been emphasised throughout all conferences, none of the reforms set out in the “Vision for Stabilization, Growth and Employment”, which was presented at the “Economic Conference for Development through Reforms with the Private sector” (CEDRE) in Paris on 6 April 2018 and reiterated at the Brussels II conference, have so far been implemented. Nevertheless, preparations are in process, in particular in the electricity sector, with the endorsement of the electricity sector reform plan by the Council of Ministers (CoM) and subsequently the parliament in April 2019. This reform plan aims to secure 24/7 power supply across the country at increased tariff rates that will significantly reduce government subsidies to the sector by 2021. Furthermore, the Integrated Solid Waste Management Road Map was approved in August 2019 by the CoM. The revision of the Code of Commerce has been started in early 2019 and is still in progress as a critical structural reform.

As highlighted as part of the CEDRE commitments, **debt stabilisation** is a critical concern in light of the high levels of public debt and fiscal deficit. Given Lebanon’s current debt level, the cost of servicing the debt would be equivalent to all of the government revenues.⁴⁶ On 9th of March 2020 Lebanon did not repay a USD 1.2 billion Eurobond, which is the first sovereign default in the country's history. The 2019 Budget, endorsed by parliament with a delay of 7 months in July 2019 included measures to decrease the fiscal deficit to 7.6%. The 2020 Budget aiming at a deficit of around 6% was passed at the end of January 2020. The reform plan which Lebanese officials agreed in February 2020 would be worked on has not yet materialised.

To stimulate Lebanon’s exports, the EU, Lebanon, and its partners have worked towards **improving EU market access and the quality of Lebanese products through value chain development**. The revised Pan Euromed Convention was finalised earlier in 2019, which signalled that Lebanon would be able to benefit from more flexible and expanded rules of origin by the end of 2019. The Livelihoods sector was active in upgrading value chains at the local level, though only a few value chains were addressed at the national level.

International partners continue to support the National Poverty Targeting Programme (NPTP) as part of an effort to develop Lebanese social assistance systems and in the context of **developing a national social protection framework**. The scale-up of the food e-voucher component of the NPTP to reach 15,000 vulnerable Lebanese households with donor funding

⁴⁵ The further degradation in the business enabling environment is illustrated by Lebanon’s decrease in ranking, from 133 to 142 (out of 190 countries) in the World Bank’s Doing Business indicators. See World Bank (2019): *Doing Business 2019*, [link](#).

⁴⁶ Bisat, A. (18 February 2019): *Should Lebanon Default? Restructuring Is Inevitable: The Sooner, the Better*. Published by the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, [link](#).

was launched in the second semester of 2019 and concluded in March 2020. Further donor-funded scale-ups to identify and reach more vulnerable Lebanese in light of the current economic crisis are underway, however, they will require the conclusion of a vulnerability assessment of the Lebanese population and a roadmap for the next household budget survey. Any expansion of the system will require a review of the targeting process for increased effectiveness and accountability. Further steps need to be taken with regard to the formalisation of the governance mechanism of the NPTP, and the adoption of the Joint Accountability framework. Technical assistance is being provided to enhance the institutional capacity of the programme and put in place comprehensive mechanisms for M&E, grievance redress and communications amongst others. More needs to be done in light of a possible expansion of the programme. A pilot using cash transfers rather than e-vouchers in order to support Lebanese children at risk is currently being implemented.⁴⁷ The mobilisation of domestic resources and a review of non-targeted subsidies is essential for ensuring the sustainability of the NPTP.

Education and Youth

The London Syria Conference in 2016 and subsequent conferences committed to the ambitious goal of **access to quality education for every child** embodied in the RACE 2014-2021 National Strategy. The number of compulsory school-aged refugee children⁴⁸ (3-18 years old) in Lebanon as of the end of 2019 was almost 621,000⁴⁹. Approximately 313,600 non-Lebanese children were enrolled in formal education in the 2018/2019 school year.⁵⁰

The first two years following the London conference witnessed substantial increases in the enrolment of non-Lebanese children in and capacity of public schools, and although this number then decreased slightly in 2018/2019, non-Lebanese children now comprise approximately 45% of the total students in the public system. At the end of the 2018/2019 school year, around 206,000 non-Lebanese children were enrolled in primary public schools⁵¹. Preliminary data for 2019/2020 indicates almost 205,700 non-Lebanese children are enrolled in primary public schools for the current year.⁵² There are usually around 5,000 non-Lebanese children enrolled in secondary public schools.

⁴⁷ See for example UNICEF (20 February 2020): *UNICEF provides cash support to more than 40,000 Lebanese children in the context of the current crisis*. [Link](#).

⁴⁸ This does not include Palestinian children

⁴⁹ Data provided by UNHCR, February 2020

⁵⁰ Data on private and semi-private number from CERD Statistics Bulletin 2018/2019, [link](#), added to public enrolment numbers from MEHE/RACE PMU *RACE II Fact Sheet*, Issue: September 2019.

⁵¹ Ministry of Education and Higher Education/RACE PMU (September 2019): *RACE II Fact Sheet*, Issue: September 2019. The figures include Prep ECE because the MEHE Reaching All Children with Education Project Management Unit (RACE PMU) considers Prep ECE as formal education.

⁵² According to CERD preliminary data for 2019/2020, [link](#).

Despite these commendable efforts, Lebanon and its partners could not **bring down the number of children outside any form of learning⁵³ and retain children who are already in the formal system.** The proportion of out-of-school refugee children (OOSC) aged 3 to 18 years reportedly increased from 55% in school year 2017-2018 to 58% in 2018-2019, and the refugee children out of learning rose to 48% compared to 40% in the previous year.⁵⁴ The increase in OOSC also has to be seen in light of an increase in school-aged non-Lebanese children in the country between 2016 and 2019. 2017 data for OOS Lebanese children of 6-14 years was 16% for girls and 19% for boys (compared with 42% and 43% for Syrian girls and boys respectively).⁵⁵

Coordination across the sector also remains difficult with many stakeholders involved with different levels of responsibilities which need clearer coordination. The Standard Operating Procedures that are regulating the formal education sector are not always implemented consistently across schools and new requirements are not always well understood and followed. For example, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) lifted the requirement for the Preparatory Early Childhood Education (Prep ECE) certificate for enrolment into public schools in October 2019 but on the ground, this certificate was sometimes still requested. MEHE also requests a birth certificate or ID in order to issue the ECE certificate, which can be an issue for some children.

The current economic crisis compounded constraints and has had further significant effects on the education sector. Schools were closed between mid-October and early/mid November 2019 due to protests which caused delays to the school year cycle and constituted a barrier to education. However, MEHE extended the registration window for second shift schools, and some schools were opened on Saturdays to make up for lost time. In early March 2020, all schools were once again closed due to threat of COVID-19 and it is unclear how long these measures will remain in place or what solutions will be proposed for to mitigate the effects of the closure. Furthermore, Lebanese children are moving from private to public schools due to the inability of families to pay schools fees (16,000 during the current school year according to preliminary registration data⁵⁶) and this trend is expected to increase in the next scholastic year 2020-2021, putting additional pressure on the education system.

Retention of Syrian children has become an issue. Last school year, some 30,000 Syrian children who had been registered in the 2017/2018 school year did not return. Similarly, at the beginning of the 2019/2020 school year, approximately 40,000 Syrian children registered

⁵³ It should be noted here that the definition of out of learning children in Lebanon is not always agreed upon.

⁵⁴ UNICEF, UNHCR & UNESCO (2019): *Out of School Children Mapping and Profiling 18-19. Key findings*. March 2019. Sector presentation.

⁵⁵ UNICEF, MEHE, UNESCO (2019): *Étude sur les enfants scolarisés au Liban. Rapport finale*.

⁵⁶ According to CERD the preliminary data for 2019-2020 says there are 289,698 Lebanese children in public schools [link](#). In 2018-2019, according to the Statistics Bulletin for that year, it was 273,634, [link](#).

in the second shift in 2018/2019 did not return to school⁵⁷, despite approximately 45% of them having successfully completed the school year⁵⁸. Some NGOs observe this can be due to households' inability to pay school transportation costs or to internal displacement. MEHE is urging school directors and education partners to reach out to these children and has been able to re-enroll around 4,500 **children who had dropped out** after the 2017/2018 school year (i.e. have been out of school the last year) into the 2019/2020 school year. As of December 2019, preliminary CERD data shows that approximately 151,000⁵⁹ non-Lebanese children are enrolled in second-shift schooling (nearly the same as last year), of which 36,000 are new students according to MEHE (mostly enrolled in Prep ECE).

Despite support from the international community, funding gaps for the enrolment of Lebanese and Syrian children persisted through 2019. MEHE announced that the start of the school year would be postponed for non-Lebanese attending second shift schools, reportedly due to a USD 9 million budget shortfall per the unit cost system⁶⁰ which resulted in the non-payment of teacher salaries towards the end of 2018-2019 school year. Donors were able to cover the outstanding amount and, in the end, the second shift school year started only a few days late on 14 October⁶¹, though this was again delayed due to the economic crisis. However, according to MEHE, around 30,000 second shift and around 12,000 first shift Syrian children are not yet funded for the current school year⁶².

In terms of **strengthening the public education system for an improved quality of education**, although Lebanon does have a child protection policy, there is little accountability and follow up of the roll out and implementation of this policy in practice and the referral mechanism could be clearer. A non-violent learning environment facilitates better retention of children. Monitoring the quality of education in Lebanon is difficult given the absence of some key frameworks and tools such as a national learning assessment strategy, a national teachers assessment framework and the observation tools set out under RACE pillars 2 and 3. Many of the current indicators which exist under these pillars are also very difficult to report against.

According to the September 2019 RACE II Factsheet, official exam results in 2018/2019 for both Grade 9 and Grade 12 showed non-Lebanese students achieved a higher pass rate than Lebanese students by 1.23% and 1.78% respectively. At Grade 9 the total passing percentage

⁵⁷ Information from MEHE RACE II PMU, provided on 3 March 2020

⁵⁸ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2019): *Situational update on the current operational environment in Lebanon – 20 Dec 2019*.

⁵⁹ According to CERD preliminary data for 2019/2020, [link](#).

⁶⁰ The cost in first shift schools is 60 USD for Lebanese and 363 USD for non-Lebanese. In second shift schools the costs for non-Lebanese is 600 USD. Each of these "units" covers a different set of costs and there is a question as to the efficiency of the current system.

⁶¹ *Joint Statement from the Ministry of Education, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, UNICEF and UNHCR in Lebanon*, October 2019, [link](#).

⁶² Information from MEHE RACE II PMU, provided on 3 March 2020

for first and second shift combined was approximately 68% in 2018/2019 and has ranged from almost 60% in 2015/2016 to almost 73% in 2017/2018.⁶³

In terms of non-formal education (NFE), the NFE policy was launched in 2019. Despite this, the total number of children and youth enrolled in regulated NFE decreased slightly from 2018 to 2019⁶⁴. A new Basic Literacy and Numeracy (BLN) curriculum has been finalised by MEHE. It should increase the quality of BLN by increasing the number of hours per module and requiring implementing partners to adapt to the new standards, however there are concerns that fewer children will then be reached through BLN with similar levels of funding. Questions still remain around the transition from non-formal to formal education which is currently low: how a comprehensive approach can be achieved to improve the transition, and if transition were to improve, how these children can be absorbed into the formal system.

Evidence-based planning through **sound performance measurement, cost-efficiency, and transparency of financial and delivery data** is currently hampered through a lack of a unified approach. In particular, data is being collected through different systems in all schools, including between first and second shifts in public schools. MEHE has released an information Management Strategy 2019-2021 which aims to unify the approach and rationalise and improve data collection and analysis to inform evidence-based programming and policies, as well as allow better transparency.

MEHE planned to share a newly consolidated workplan for 2019/2020, which should highlight some elements of MEHE's **long-term vision**. This process is still ongoing. As of 2021 MEHE intends to work on the basis of a five-year plan (2021 – 2025) the development of which has begun. Furthermore, MEHE is working on preparing a draft SDG 4 strategy/Action Plan presenting a more comprehensive long-term vision for the education sector. Both are scheduled to be shared with stakeholders during 2020.

Efforts to improve **technical and vocational education and training (TVET)** have continued in 2019. Following the endorsement of the National Framework Strategy on TVET in 2018, the development of action plans for its implementation is in its final stage with one of the line ministry action plans approved. Their implementation will require the reactivation of the Higher Council for TVET to prioritise and guide the implementation of the five separate action plans of involved governmental institutions.

⁶³ Ministry of Education and Higher Education/RACE PMU (September 2019): *RACE II Fact Sheet*, Issue: September 2019.

⁶⁴ According to ActivityInfo data the total in 2018 was 67,456 compared to 64,497 in 2019.

Health

The health sector in Lebanon is currently under serious strain due to several developments occurring from October 2019 onwards as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. Funding was not sufficient to address all the challenges in 2019 and 2020.

Firstly, there is increased demand on public health care from Lebanese who can no longer afford private costs due to the economic crisis. The percentage of vulnerable Lebanese benefitting from subsidised consultations in 2019 increased by 14.5% compared to 2018.⁶⁵ In December, a higher number of Public Health Care (PHC) consultations was noted, which could either be seasonal or related to the economic situation. Mental health concerns are reported, with increased stress and anxiety among women and girls, as well as workers who have lost their jobs. Children with war-related traumas are being re-traumatised by violent events. Although the total incidence of suicide has not significantly changed, suicides have received more attention through social media, attributing the current crisis as a main driver. The number of callers to the National Embrace/Ministry of Public Health Hotline seeking support on emotional distress and suicide prevention is reported to be higher than the average in the previous year. The number of calls spiked from around 4,000 answered calls per month to 12,000 in October and December 2019, respectively.⁶⁶ It should be noted that during this period there was also increased communication and information regarding the existence and availability of a hotline.

In terms of medication, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) was not able to transfer the allocated budget for chronic and acute disease medications for 2019 to complement the gap filling procurement of acute medication by the UN agencies, and delays for medications and vaccines are expected in 2020⁶⁷ which could affect the **quality and the timely delivery of health care services**. However, a more sophisticated pipeline with additional donor funding is currently being designed.

Secondly, in January 2020 hospitals raised the alarm of a deepening health crisis in Lebanon and their inability to pay employees or provide acute disease medicines, essential treatments and surgery.⁶⁸ The impact of the devaluation of the Lebanese Pound due to the economic crisis has translated into a 30-40% increase in the price of the predominantly imported medical supplies. The decreased cash flow due to the economic crisis also means many supplies are simply unavailable. The number of subsidised admissions for Syrian

⁶⁵ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2019): *Situational update on the current operational environment in Lebanon – Feb 2020*.

⁶⁶ UNHCR (February 2020): *Donor briefing: UNHCR Lebanon Operation*

⁶⁷ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2019): *Situational update on the current operational environment in Lebanon – Feb 2020*.

⁶⁸ Daily Star (17 January 2020): *Hospitals sound alarm as Lebanon's health crisis deepens*, [link](#).

refugees decreased by 17% compared to 2018. It is estimated that the total admission rate for all nationalities went down by 30% by the end of 2019.⁶⁹

Thirdly, the arrival of COVID-19 virus in late February 2020 has further compounded the situation, increasing the demands on the health care system and necessitating additional health preparedness. These three factors together mean the existence of a **functioning health system** in Lebanon is jeopardised.⁷⁰

Fear of social unrest and road blockages presented a barrier to **access to health care** towards the end of 2019, leading to a temporary drop in the number of Syrians consulting at PHCCs. The number of Lebanese accessing PHCs increased and more information is being sought to understand the reasons for the fluctuations at the primary health care level.

Focussing specifically on access to **affordable health care**, while subsidised health care services were available and increased during 2019, costs related to accessing health care remained the highest barrier and it was clear that enforcing existing regulations was key to ensuring free provision of health services including vaccinations. There has also been a drop in the number of persons receiving financial support for hospitalisation from a monthly average of approximately 6,500 (January to September) to approximately 5,000 in November 2019.⁷¹ Vulnerable populations are not able to pay their share of the costs because payment is being requested in USD – or in LBP using the informal exchange rate – and they are also facing additional indirect costs such as transportation fees. Prices for supplies related to preventing COVID-19 had also increased, reportedly by 25%, at the time of writing.

In terms of **system strengthening and enhanced capacity building**, during 2019, there was little evidence of a unified systemic approach that focused on strengthening the existing system and its sustainability while ensuring the resilient provision of affordable and predictable quality healthcare services to persons in need. Some progress has been made in terms of better coordination and dialogue among donors in this sense, as well as better coordination on PHC approaches, services and packages provided between MoPH and key actors. However, such a systemic approach would *inter alia* require multi-year funding, improved planning and a more adequate prioritisation of needs. Despite the acknowledged challenges, a movement away from project-based planning to long-term strategy is necessary, as well as more leadership and governance of the sector, particularly in the light

⁶⁹ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2019): *Situational update on the current operational environment in Lebanon – Feb 2020*.

⁷⁰ It should be noted that until October 2019 the Ministry of Public Health maintained a functioning health system, mostly avoiding large-scale outbreaks of major diseases and continuously working to increase the trust in public health services. According to the VASyR, the data for which is collected in the first semester of 2019, Syrian refugee households requiring Primary Health Care services increased to 63% in 2019 from 46% in 2016. Despite the rise in need, access to health care had been improving slightly and those who needed primary or secondary care were more likely to receive it in early 2019.

⁷¹ Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon (2019): *Situational update on the current operational environment in Lebanon – 20 Dec 2019*.

of the current situation. A National Health Forum scheduled for December 2019 was cancelled and no mention of rescheduling a discussion on UHC has yet been made.

A National Committee has been put in place for COVID-19 but there is a lack of human resources, particularly adequately trained staff, and needed supplies in Lebanon to deal with an epidemic. Coordination efforts increased as the national response plan fell into place and forums for information sharing and decision making were created between the government, UN agencies and NGOs. At the end of March 2020 isolation sites were being set up, including opportunities for refugees, flu clinics are providing services for everyone (not only Lebanese) with the idea of decongesting emergency rooms, and virtual trainings were being piloted.⁷²

However, in mid-March Human Rights Watch reported that 21 municipalities in Lebanon have introduced discriminatory restrictions on Syrian refugees that do not apply to Lebanese as part of the efforts to combat COVID-19 which undermines the country's public health response.⁷³ UN Women Lebanon has also published a report on the key gender issues as related to the COVID-19 outbreak in Lebanon such as increased vulnerability to GBV, the unequal burden of unpaid care and low access to life-saving information.⁷⁴ It remains to be seen if the health system can maintain its resilience in the face of both increased needs due to COVID-19 (UNHCR estimates that more than 30 million dollars is required to cover the additional needs in the COVID-19 response⁷⁵) and a decrease of finances available to public services.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Although there is only one partial commitment to WASH, embedded in the Health commitments, agreed on at the Brussels II conference, the state of WASH and shelter - particularly in urban areas - are critical in the context of the economic crisis in Lebanon. Due to the current economic crisis, the vulnerability of households in relation to shelter is likely to be heightened and there is a potential to exacerbate social tensions. This links to protection concerns and increased evictions. Furthermore, the construction of water and wastewater facilities in informal settlements (IS) has been delayed. The inability to pay for or procure materials from abroad due to the lack of US dollars in the country is affecting both Lebanese water institutions and the activities of local and international NGOs in IS.

The continued growth in ITS not only means increased humanitarian support requirements, but also has significant effects on the ecosystem as well as agricultural and other non-residential land uses. During 2019, there was increased pressure on refugees living in

⁷² Central Health Working Group (27 March 2020): *Meeting Minutes*

⁷³ Human Rights Watch, (March 2020): *Lebanon: Refugees at Risk in COVID-19 Response*, [Link](#)

⁷⁴ UN Women Lebanon (March 2020): *Women's Needs and Gender Equality in Lebanon's COVID-19 Response*

⁷⁵ UNHCR (March 2020): *COVID-19 Update, Lebanon 30 March 2020*

Informal Tented Settlements (ITS), on grounds of environmental considerations. A court ruling was also issued to an NGO working in the WASH sector, placing the sole responsibility for pollution in the Litani River area, on their organisation. This has now been overturned at the Supreme Court which ruled that the NGO in question is not responsible.

The Ministry of Energy and Water did increase its coordination efforts in 2019, and the sector has also reorganised itself to align and work together with both stabilisation and humanitarian actors through different and thematic groups. However, overall improved coordination of WASH actors is still needed as well as further inter-ministerial collaboration and ongoing support to increasing capacities of Water Establishments. Ideally, WASH issues should be addressed through combined programming targeting municipal and ITS infrastructure jointly while paying attention to the protection of refugees.

Regarding **access to uninterrupted water sanitation and hygiene interventions in “informal tented settlements”**. Only 30% of the ISs mentioned that water is fully available without any interruption. On average, drinking water is available 5 days per week and 10 hours per day and major shortcomings in terms of water quality are reported.⁷⁶

87% of household members in ITS have access to an improved sanitation facility whereas outside ITS this figure is higher at 94%. Access to basic sanitation services (an improved sanitation facility which is not shared) has continued to increase from 70% in 2018 to 87% in 2019 however, it is lower in ITS at 61%.⁷⁷ In addition, the lack of waste water treatment plants, both in terms of number and of efficiency, has been preventing the proper disposal of wastewater services from ISs, which is increasing social tension and the risk of evictions.

Displaced Syrians living in informal settlements, both tented and (peri-) urban, as well as vulnerable Lebanese people, have become dependent on either low-quality water or relatively expensive bottled water, water trucking and desludging services. The latter are not available in half of ISs, mostly because of cost issues⁷⁸. More critically, 60% of almost 300,000 people residing in informal settlements rely on trucked water provided by the private sector, while the rest meet needs from mostly unsafe wells or illegal network tapping.⁷⁹ The spread of COVID-19 means enhanced hygiene practices, which require a higher quantity of water, are necessary. In order for the population to protect themselves, there is a need to increase the number of litres of water per capita per day. The reliance on water trucking will mean this is very expensive.

⁷⁶ Lebanon Protection Consortium (March 2020): Working Document, *Quantitative Analysis of WASH Indicators from the CPA Platform*.

⁷⁷ Lebanon Inter-Agency Coordination, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2019): *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon 2019*.

⁷⁸ Lebanon Inter-Agency Coordination, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP (2019): *Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon 2019*.

⁷⁹ Lebanon Inter-Agency Coordination and Government of Lebanon (March 2020): *Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, 2017-2020 (2020 Update)*.

A phone survey conducted by the international NGOs under the Lebanon Protection Consortium with Syrian refugees in informal settlements found that 98% of respondents reported at least one change in their daily lives due to COVID-19, 71% feel increased panic or stress and 49% reported they had to stop working due to restrictions.⁸⁰

Coordination and Partnership

Prior to October 2019, **national leadership** by the Government of Lebanon continued to strengthened coordination between the national and regional levels of the response. However, as mentioned under WASH, inter-ministerial coordination could be further improved. It is also recognised that the existing knowledge gaps regarding new vulnerabilities since the economic crisis, and the lack of tangible sources to refer to, present a challenge in this regard for the new government formed as of February 2020.

The appropriateness and impact of the current response model, in particular in light of the humanitarian – development nexus, has been deemed efficient and the current structure will remain. Revisions to the structure are not currently planned despite newly-emerging needs of Lebanese, exacerbated needs of refugees and an unstable economic, political and public health environment. The mid-term review of the LCRP 2017-2020 in conjunction with the mid-term review of the UN Strategic Framework took place in 2019, which recommended a number of adjustments to the LCRP architecture including to increase government leadership and improve synergies across sectors. The coordination across UN agencies and the donors should also be clarified. It further recommends integrating the Brussels commitments at strategic objective and sector outcome level to strengthen mutual accountability, refugee protection, durable solutions, service delivery and support to Government in the LCRP.⁸¹ The latter is aimed to be done through the 2019 LCRP Annual Report.

The backlog in pending **work permits for essential international staff of national and international NGOs** was cleared during 2018 and 2019 and processing time was sped up, however, the **operational space for NGOs** continues to shrink.

In November 2019, due to the economic crisis, several local NGOs reported the risk of shutting down as, unlike international NGOs who benefit from greater Headquarter-level support, it is harder for local NGOs to adapt to the crisis. In the current climate not only has the cost of doing business increased due to the devaluation of the currency, but due to various bank restrictions withdrawing cash from back accounts is challenging (withdrawals

⁸⁰ Lebanon Protection Consortium (March 2020): *COVID-19. Concerns and needs of Syrian refugees in Informal Tented Settlements in Lebanon*

⁸¹ Trias Consult and Particip (2019). Mid term review of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (2017-2020) and United Nations Strategic Framework (2017-2020). Final Report – Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP). 25 September 2019, [link](#).

are capped at a certain level). Some NGO staff and suppliers are also unable to cash their salaries and payments. Many banks do not allow small value cheques to be deposited unless other deposits are made and an increasing number of partners are requesting payment in cash.⁸² If this situation continues, there might be implications on the service delivery and project implementation of partners.

Way Forward

The impact of COVID-19

Covid-19 will have a massive impact on Lebanon, as on so many other countries around the world. The global collapse in demand will affect Lebanon's exports and investment. The slowdown of the domestic economy will affect livelihoods and further reduce government revenues. Every sector will be affected. The health sector will be put under even greater pressure. The education sector will suffer from the closure of schools. The social protection sector will see more Lebanese and refugee families moving into extreme poverty and requiring cash transfers to survive.

The Government of Lebanon acted rapidly and decisively at the beginning of the pandemic to order a widespread lockdown, which limited the spread of the virus. International organisations and donors are restructuring their programmes to respond to the crisis.

Brussels III meeting pledges in March 2019 suggested that donors intend to sustain their financial support to Lebanon in 2020 and beyond, with a gradual shift from humanitarian to development funding. As well as the huge challenges of the pandemic, the current crisis also creates opportunities. The pandemic has raised again the questions of transition and nexus that would allow a sustainable long-term response to the needs of all people living in Lebanon regardless of their origins or nationality. It is acknowledged there is a need for more integrated vulnerability assessments as well as to move to a more comprehensive and holistic planning framework and sectoral targets.

Future Monitoring

The independent monitoring process continues to reveal gaps and inconsistencies in the data, even for basic indicators. In addition, there are still very limited forward-looking targets for national plans that can be used to monitor the Brussels partnership commitments. There

⁸² UNICEF (November 2019): *Donor Meeting Contingency Planning & Situation Update*.

is a need to decide what monitoring will be put in place for the future and how to integrate this process with the monitoring of other national and sectoral plans.



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