



Remarks

by

**H.E. Dr. Nawaf Salam
Permanent Representative of Lebanon
to the United Nations**

at

**UN Habitat Event on
Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants:
Critical Challenges for Sustainable Urbanization**

New York, May 18, 2016

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon,

It is my pleasure to join you at this stage of the discussion.

As pointed out by the High Level panel on the post 2015 Development Agenda “cities are where the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost”.

Today the world is facing the largest crisis of enforced displacement since World War II. 90% of refugees live in developing countries and eight countries alone host more than half of the world’s refugees.

With 1.2 million registered Syrian refugees Lebanon has the highest rate of 232 per capita, let alone more than 400 thousand Palestinian refugees living in camps across the country since more than six decades.

The mass influx of Syrian refugees into Lebanon has multiplied the challenges facing the country and its urban centers as a whole, as well as its underdeveloped regions. This has overstretched their originally limited resources and their education, health, energy, water and sanitation infrastructure, reducing housing capacity, increasing their unemployment levels, seriously affecting the economic activity and investment climate, and threatening its security.

Based on our national experience, and challenges we face, I can assert that the only way forward is a global shift in the humanitarian assistance approach.

It is time indeed to recognize the need to move from only humanitarian assistance to addressing the development needs of refugees and displaced as well as those of host communities.

The World Humanitarian Summit which will be convened in Istanbul in a few days, will be a major opportunity to mobilize all partners in this regard. Later this year, the High Level Humanitarian Segment of ECOSOC will keep building on this momentum until the High Level Meeting to Address Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants in September.

The New Urban Agenda will no doubt be a leading inspiration to implement the sustainable development goals.

I look forward to hear your thoughts and inputs on the way forward.

Thank you.