



Statement

by

**H.E. Mr. Tammam Salam
President of the Council of Ministers
of the Republic of Lebanon**

Leader's Summit on Refugees

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Check against delivery

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

Your Majesty, President Obama, Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In absolute terms, Lebanon is by far the biggest world donor to the cause of refugees. According to the World Bank, over 15 billion dollars have been contributed by the Lebanese economy to ensure public services, education and health to the Syrians and Palestinians who compose one third of our population today.

In the past two years, no less than five major high-level conferences on the subject have taken place. No less than three meetings are held this week here, at the UN. What do we have to show for all this mobilization of political power? Very little indeed, especially when we consider the overflow of those crossing now to Europe.

This faltering of the international community should be urgently remedied:

First, by devoting the substantial funding required in order to manage the consequences of the crisis.

Second, by massively investing in development aid in order to trigger durable growth, create jobs and fight poverty for the benefit of host populations and refugees alike.

Third, by establishing a transparent mechanism to track the multiplicity of funding flows, generate synergies and avoid waste.

Fourth, by significantly activating burden-sharing efforts by all countries which have the possibility to relocate refugees, including by the countries of the region.

All this implies a radical re-directing of the way aid and assistance is now being conceived and provided. A new model should be adopted and implemented rapidly lest we witness an inevitable destabilization which is a fertile ground for extremism and terrorism.

Naively, we are tempted to say that it is far more economical to prevent radicalization by providing aid than fighting it with expensive weaponry, taking in the process thousands of lives!

We firmly believe that the only lasting solution is a political agreement that will allow for the safe and dignified return of the Syrians to their homes.

We firmly believe that such a solution is in the hands of some of you sitting in this room.

Hundreds of thousands of victims have already paid the price of this conflict. How many more before an accord is reached?

The fate of our peoples is at stake.

The fate of our countries is at stake.

Our only recourse is the solidarity of the international community. It is in your interest as much as it is in ours to avoid more destabilizing consequences of this conflict which affect us all.