



Statement

by

**Marwan Francis,
Counselor**

at the

**Annual Session of the Executive Board of UNICEF, New York 13-16 June
2017**

**Presentation of the Report of the field visit to Lebanon by members of the
Executive Board, 21-25 March 2017**

New York, June 15, 2017

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

Thank you Mister chair,

My delegation welcomes the report UNICEF/2017/EB/8, and wishes to thank the members of the Executive Board who took part in the visit to Lebanon from 21 to 25 March: The Deputy Permanent Representative of Ethiopia, the Deputy Director from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden; the delegates from the Permanent Missions of Nepal, Canada, Antigua and Barbuda and the Russian Federation, as well as Mr. Nicolas Pron, Secretary of the Executive Board and Mr. Gilles Fagninou, Assistant Secretary of the Executive Board.

UNICEF has been present in Lebanon since 1948 working closely with the Lebanese Government and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other partners.

As a middle-income country facing multi-dimensional challenges, we attach great importance to the work of UNICEF particularly in strengthening Lebanon's capabilities to meet the objectives set in the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

We trust that the field visit allowed the delegation to gain a first-hand account of the work of UNICEF through concrete examples of its cooperation with the Government and the United Nations country team, by meeting with government representatives, including the Lebanese Prime Minister, civil society organizations, social workers, teachers and school administrators, young people and religious leaders.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Syria, Lebanon has shown unwavering commitment to its obligations under international law and solidarity with the Syrian people. Lebanon has welcomed around 1.2 million refugees fleeing war-torn Syria.

Lebanese communities have opened their schools, their clinics and their homes to hundreds of thousands of Syrians who have fled their country.

Despite the concerted efforts of the government, the international community and civil society to mitigate the socio economic and security impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon and the large-scale response underway encapsulated in the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) launched in January 2017, the needs of the affected populations, both displaced and host communities, are outpacing the Government of Lebanon and its partners' ability to provide adequate services to reach the most vulnerable Lebanese children, children displaced by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, and Palestinian refugee children.

We hope that this field mission will be an opportunity to raising awareness about the needs of refugees and their host communities, the work of UNICEF and the continued support required.

Lebanon supports UNICEF's health intervention projects to ensure greater access of vulnerable Lebanese populations and displaced Syrians to quality primary health services. UNICEF is also working with the Ministry of Energy and Water to increase sustainable access to quality drinking water.

Most importantly UNICEF is supporting efforts by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon to provide access to quality education for boys and girls in primary schools by subsidizing primary school enrolment fees. Just last week USAID announced a contribution of \$30 million to UNICEF in Lebanon during a press conference at the Ministry, to support programs that provide education for vulnerable school-aged children, including those affected by the crisis in Syria.

This contribution will ensure that at least 100,000 Lebanese and Syrian displaced children attend public schools country-wide during the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years.

Thank you Mister Chair.