



**Statement**

**by**

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to the United Nations**

**at the**

**2017 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development  
Convened under the auspices of the  
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***Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations  
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Mr. / Madam President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on the success of the 2017 High Level Political Forum, thank you for your leadership and many thanks to the hard work of our colleagues in the UN Secretariat.

We welcome the special attention that has been given to poverty eradication, as the general theme, and as one of the seven SDGs under focus in this year's Forum. Poverty, in its multiple forms and dimensions, remains the biggest global challenge and its eradication is an indispensable requirement for achieving sustainable development, including in middle income countries such as Lebanon.

The Lebanese Government has acknowledged this fact by prioritizing the need to tackle and reduce poverty on its economic and social agenda.

Moreover, and despite progress made in the past couple of decades, Lebanon continues to face persistent and emerging challenges across the other 6 SDGs under focus, such as inadequate investment in rural agriculture and agricultural research in relation to SDG2, worrying levels of drug and substance abuse and road accident casualties in relation to SDG3, weak representation and participation of women in political institutions in relation to SDG5, insufficient industrialization and overstretched transportation and energy infrastructure in relation to SDG9, increased coastal urbanization, and land and sea-based sources of pollution in relation to SDG14, in addition to sparse public financial resources and persistent difficulties in revenue and individual income tax collection in relation to SDG17.

These and other economic, social, environmental and security challenges facing Lebanon, have been compounded in recent years as a result of the influx of more than a million-refugee due to the ongoing crisis in neighbouring Syria.

The impact has been immense: slowing economic growth, increasing unemployment and poverty levels, and overburdening infrastructure in various sectors.

In confronting such a complex humanitarian crisis, Lebanon will require international support beyond the narrow prism of humanitarian assistance.

Longer term development financing, in the form of concessional loans and grants or flexible investment loans, and spearheaded by international and regional development banks, is essential to deal with a protracted refugee crisis of such magnitude. This financing will be used in upgrading Lebanon's overburdened infrastructure, with priority given to the education, sanitation, electricity and transportation sectors, to meet the needs of both refugees and their host communities.

Mr. / Madam President,

In the past few weeks, Lebanon has stepped up its efforts to implement Agenda 2030, the Council of Ministers' took the decision on 21 June 2017 to establish a National Committee to lead and coordinate national efforts to implement Agenda 2030 and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Committee will be headed by the Prime Minister and will include officials from all relevant ministries and departments, and representatives from the private sector and civil society. Among its primary functions will be the integration of the SDGs into national sustainable development plans and programs, raising public awareness about the SDGs, developing a national database for SDG indicators, and preparing Lebanon's Voluntary National Review.

Obviously, the role of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) will be crucial in assisting Lebanon during the implementation and follow-up phases through normative support, policy advice, and capacity building.

It is in this respect, that the Head of Lebanon's Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), and the UN Resident Coordinator, signed last month a project agreement entitled "SDGs in Lebanon: Analyzing Gaps and Reporting Progress", to carry out a gap analysis of the current situation in Lebanon in relation to each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, in consultation with all concerned parties.

The gap analysis will include a review of all the relevant laws, decrees, national strategies and plans towards the attainment of SDGs. It will also include providing support for the preparation of Lebanon's "Voluntary National Review".

I thank you for your attention.