



Statement

by

**H.E. Dr. Nawaf Salam
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to the United Nations**

**at the
General debate**

**of the
Second Committee**

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Check Against Delivery

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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you and members of the Bureau on your election to steer the work of the Second Committee during the 72nd Session of the General Assembly. You can count on my delegation's full support and constructive engagement throughout this Session.

As we move into the third year of the implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Second Committee will continue to represent an important platform to exchange views and ideas among member states and other relevant stakeholders regarding the challenges we are all facing in the implementation and follow up phases, and to discuss and agree on the most effective and efficient approaches and policies to tackle those challenges at the global, regional and country levels.

The implementation of this universal and integrated Agenda will stretch the financial, institutional and human capacities of most developing countries, including middle income countries. Hence, the role of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) will be crucial in assisting developing countries to achieve a successful implementation of the Agenda. The new QCPR resolution that was adopted by this Committee during the 71st session will provide, for the next four years, the guiding framework for the UN Development System, as it seeks to assist programme countries in integrating Agenda 2030 into their national development plans.

Mr. Chairman,

In the past few months, Lebanon has stepped up its efforts to implement Agenda 2030, which was reflected by the Council of Ministers' decision on 21 June 2017 to establish a National Committee to lead and coordinate national efforts to implement the Agenda 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 SDG's into national sustainable development plans and programs, raising public awareness about them, developing a national database for SDG indicators, and preparing Lebanon's first Voluntary National Review that will be presented at the High Level Political Forum in July next year.

Obviously, the role of the United Nations Development System (UNDS) will be crucial in assisting Lebanon during the implementation and follow-up phases. It is in this light that the head of Lebanon's Council for Development and Reconstruction, and the UN Resident Coordinator, signed in June this year a project entitled "**SDGs in Lebanon: Analyzing Gaps and Reporting Progress**", under which a gap analysis will be carried out of the current situation in Lebanon in relation to each of the 17 SDG's. The gap analysis will include a review of all the relevant laws, decrees, national strategies and plans and their importance towards the attainment of those goals. It will also include providing support for the preparation of Lebanon's Voluntary National Review.

Mr. Chairman,

The new QCPR resolution has also emphasized on the need for an enhanced coordination between the development, humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts of the United Nations entities, at the national level, in countries facing humanitarian emergencies and in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Lebanon is one of those countries where peacebuilding, development and humanitarian, not to mention peacekeeping activities, have been running simultaneously in the past few decades. The United Nations has been an important partner in these efforts, whether through UNIFIL or UNRWA or UNHCR or UNDP and other entities of the UN Development System.

The humanitarian dimension of those activities has become more visible in recent years as a result of the influx of more than 1.2 million refugees due to the ongoing crisis in neighbouring Syria. This massive influx has compounded the economic, social, environmental and security challenges facing Lebanon, slowing economic growth, increasing unemployment and poverty levels, and overburdening infrastructure in various sectors.

As a result, the Lebanese Government has consistently emphasized on the need to enhance coordination and coherence between the development and humanitarian activities of the United Nations entities and operations in Lebanon to meet the needs of both the refugees and their host communities.

It was in this context that the Lebanese Government and the UN System signed in October 2016 a pioneering United Nations Strategic Framework (UNSF) for the period 2017-2020 to replace the previous UN Development Assistance Framework. The new framework recognizes that in view of the multi-dimensional challenges facing Lebanon and the multiple mandates under which the UN is operating in the country, the UN needs to follow a “Whole of Lebanon” approach that leverages and integrates the UN’s diverse expertise, capacities and resources to support the Government of Lebanon at meeting its priorities and manage security, political, governance and socio-economic challenges to stability. The approach also aims at supporting Lebanon on the path to longer term sustainable development in accordance with the vision, principles and goals of Agenda 2030.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

Let me remind that the marine oil spill, which was caused by Israel’s destruction of the oil storage tanks at El-Jiyeh electric power plant, south of Beirut, in July 2006, continues to impact human health, economic growth and the efforts to achieve sustainable development in Lebanon. The inability to contain the spread of the spilled oil in the early critical stages following the attack, due to the Israeli air and marine military blockade at the time, has led to prolonged adverse effects that still exist today.

In this regard, Lebanon continues to rely on the support of the International Community to, once again, adopt the “Oil slick on Lebanese shores” resolution, which requests Israel to assume responsibility for prompt and adequate compensation to Lebanon for the costs of repairing the environmental damage caused by the oil spill.

I thank you for your attention.