

**Lebanese Republic**

**The official report on progress made in the implementation and identification of challenges  
to implement the Beijing Platform for Action**

**Beirut 2019**

## **Introduction**

In light of the Lebanese State's endeavor to fulfill all its international commitments to achieve equality between women and men, and to present the achievements and discussions as well as the challenges facing this objective before the international community, the following are the most prominent achievements of Lebanon at all legislative, political, cultural, and economic levels, as well as the challenges facing said achievements regarding women's progress in light of the strategic areas set out in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the period between 2014 and 2019.

The Lebanese Constitution - issued on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 1926, and its subsequent amendments - dealt with provisions for the determination of the rights and duties of Lebanese citizens. A preamble was added, under the constitutional amendment of 1989, in paragraph (b), which states that "Lebanon is Arab in its identity and in its affiliation. It is a founding and active member of the League of Arab States and abides by its pacts and covenants. Lebanon is also a founding and active member of the United Nations Organization and abides by its covenants and by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Government shall embody these principles in all fields and areas without exception." Paragraph C of the Preamble of the Constitution states: "Lebanon is a parliamentary democratic republic based on respect for public liberties, especially the freedom of opinion and belief, and respect for social justice and equality of rights and duties among all citizens without discrimination." Moreover, the Constitutional Council of Lebanon in its resolution No. 1 dated 12/09/1997 has resolved to consider the preamble to the Constitution as an indivisible part of the Constitution, with the principles therein enjoying the same constitutional status as those of the Constitution itself.

Lebanon adhered to a number of international covenants and declarations regarding various human rights. Moreover, confirming the importance of this international context, article 2 of the Lebanese Code of Civil Procedure stated that the provisions of international treaties supersede the provisions of ordinary law and stressed the need for courts to adhere to the principle of hierarchy. If the provisions of international treaties collide with the provisions of the ordinary law, the former overrides the latter." In compliance with international human rights standards and the need to protect and apply them, the Lebanese State ratified 6 out of 9 basic human rights treaties, and 7 basic treaties out of 8 issued by the International Labour Organization. Moreover, the Lebanese government is keen to prepare periodic international reports and to present them, to the best of its abilities, within the time limit to the relevant international mechanisms, and endeavoring to meet its recommendations.

On 26 September 2017, during the speech he delivered at the Summit on Sustainable Development in New York, Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced Lebanon's commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This was reiterated by the current Government in the Ministerial Statement (31/1/2019). Accordingly, a national committee chaired by the Lebanese Prime Minister was formed to oversee the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, Lebanon has prepared, in 2018, the first voluntary national review to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (VNR). The information contained therein represents a basic source for information stated in this report.

The National Commission for Lebanese Women, the official machinery concerned with women's issues and gender mainstreaming in public policies, prepared this report on the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25 years after its adoption, covering the period 2014-2019.

The preparation of this report coincided with Lebanon's submission of the first voluntary national review to implement the Sustainable Development Goals in mid - 2018, the preparation of the national report of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the third round of the Universal Periodic Review that the Lebanese State must present to the Human Rights Council later this year, and preparation of the report prepared annually by the National Commission for Lebanese Women on the implementation of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021.

Within the framework of the preparation of this report, the Lebanese National Commission for Lebanese Women adopted a participatory methodology in which it cooperated with ministries, public administrations and concerned civil society organizations for the purpose of collecting and discussing information in consultative meetings. Firstly, The National Commission prepared a questionnaire that included the areas and materials covering the four reports (Beijing 25, CEDAW, UPR and the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon), which was sent to 23 concerned ministries and public administrations and 28 civil society organizations selected on the basis of their pivotal role in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Based on the responses received, the National Commission organized several consultative meetings with ministries, civil society organizations and academic institutions to monitor and discuss all the achievements and challenges facing the advancement of women's conditions in Lebanon.

It should be noted that the National Commission for Lebanese Women, in drawing up this report, has utilized the *Guidance Note for comprehensive reviews at the national level* prepared by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), in collaboration with the regional commissions, including ESCWA. It sought also the assistance of a committee formed to provide technical assistance and cooperate in drafting the report. This committee included experts from the Center for Women of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

Based on the above, and after being provided with information on the achievements and challenges facing the advancement of the situation of women in Lebanon, and on the basis of the consultative meetings and the information gathered from various sources, the National Commission for Lebanese Women worked on drafting this report in an analytical way demonstrating the achievements made and the impacts of challenges on the advancement of women's situation according to the twelve critical areas of concern identified in the Beijing Platform for Action.

Finally, we would like to mention some of the challenges faced by the National Commission for Lebanese Women in the drafting and preparation of this report, as follows:

1. Lack of official data and statistics necessary to measure gaps between men and women in different areas and thus measure actual progress or decline in the gender equality issue.
2. The slow response of the concerned parties in providing information due to the administrative hierarchy on the one hand, and the complexity of the issues that are assigned to each ministry and distributed to different directorates and departments on the other hand.

## **Section I: Priorities, achievements, challenges and set-backs**

### **1. What have been the most important achievements, challenges and set-backs in progress towards gender equality and the empowerment of women over the past 5 years?**

Since the submission of the last official report on Lebanon's commitment to implement the recommendations of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the situation of women in Lebanon has witnessed a remarkable progress, especially at the policy level (strategies and legislations), which will hopefully contribute to changing the prevailing perceptions about the roles of men and women in society to attain equality.

Lebanon has recently witnessed many positive transformations at the level of political institutions, which offer favorable opportunities for serious action to eliminate violence against women and girls. At the forefront of these transformations is the creation of the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs, which in the present Government has become the Ministry of State for Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth, and another ministry for human rights (which has been abolished in the current government) for the first time in the history of Lebanon. This transformation has been followed by the following transformations:

- The establishment of the National Human Rights Plan by the Human Rights Committee of the Lebanese Parliament (2013-2019);
- The establishment by the Parliament of a special committee to follow up the implementation of the laws in the Lebanese Parliament, including Law 293/2014 on the protection of women and other members of the family from domestic violence, which occupies a prominent position among its main concerns;
- The issuance by the National Commission for Lebanese Women of annual reports on the implementation of the first national plan of action (2013-2016) for the implementation of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2011-2021), which shows the amount of work done by different partners to combat violence against women and girls despite limited possibilities, and the launch of the Second National Action Plan (2017-2019) by the National Commission for Lebanese Women;
- The creation by the General Directorate of the Internal Security Forces of the Human Rights Office in its General Inspectorate, which receives complaints about the abuse by the security forces of their authority in dealing with complainants against violence;

- Last but not least, the transformations witnessed by the active political parties, in terms of women assuming leadership positions, including the position of the secretary general of the party, or in terms of incorporating some of female candidate names from outside the traditional political class in the lists of their candidates in the parliamentary elections held in May 2018.

The following are the main achievements of the Lebanese government. An analysis of the challenges to achieving equality will be presented as well:

### **First: the local context**

The following are the main achievements and challenges at the level of legislations and strategies:

#### A. At the legislative level

Lebanon has achieved important achievements in terms of passing laws that promote respect for human rights, working towards removing some provisions of the laws in force, and adopting new legislations that contribute to the promotion of equality between women and men. The following is a list of general legislations approved by the government, followed by a list of legislations that directly affects the situation of women.

##### i. General legislations

- The law establishing the National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee for the Prevention of Torture

In compliance with the Paris Principles, the Parliament enacted Law No. 62 of 27/10/2016 establishing the National Human Rights Commission. In accordance with the law, this National Authority is responsible for monitoring the human rights situation by reviewing laws, decrees and administrative decisions, investigating complaints of violations of human rights and issuing periodic reports on their results.

This Authority will monitor violations of international humanitarian law in times of armed conflicts and ensure accountability. It plays a crucial role in strengthening and monitoring human rights laws and standards.

In connection with the obligations under the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which Lebanon has already ratified, a permanent committee, the Committee for the Prevention of Torture, has been established within the National Human Rights Commission. Its function is to protect the rights of persons detained and deprived of their liberty and enjoys an independent legal personality in all matters relating to torture and its prevention.

- The Law to Punish Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment

In 2017, the Government of Lebanon passed the Law to Punish Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The law entered into force on 26 October 2017 after its publication in the official newspaper.

- The Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons Law

The Parliament adopted, on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 2018, the proposed law on persons missing and forcibly disappeared, which includes basic points relating to the establishment of the right of knowledge and access to the families of victims of enforced disappearance, and the formation of an independent competent national body whose members are to include both men and women (Article 11 of Law No. 105, 30 / 11/2018)

- The Right to Access Information Law

On 1/2/2018 the law was issued on the "right to access information", which guarantees the protection of citizens' right to access and access the information and documents in the administration.

- The Code of Commerce

On 29/3/2019, the Code of Commerce was amended. Several provisions were adopted, the most important of which is the possibility of forming a company from one person, canceling the shares of the holder and the shares of an order, and issuing preferential shares and public deposit receipts, allowing the closed companies to secure the financing they may need during a certain period. Moreover, said amendments also included new provisions regarding corporate mergers and splits, and gender equality in case of bankruptcy, specifically articles 625-629.

ii. Legislations which directly affect the status of women

Lebanon has achieved a relative progress by adopting the following laws and amendments:

- The Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence Law

Lebanon has taken an important step towards protecting women from domestic violence. After years of demand, the Parliament passed the Law on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence. The importance of this law is that it includes, on the one hand, protective provisions for members of the family who are exposed to violence, including women, and on the other hand, punishments for the perpetrators.

This law has contributed to strengthening the capacity of institutions to address violence, especially in courts where, following the adoption of the law and in cases of women subjected to violence, some judges have noted the lack of the text of the law - some of which have led to judicial decisions that expand the interpretation of the law of the concept of violence covered by article 2 of the law (decision of the judge of Urgent Matters in Beirut on 31/5-2014), and the jurisprudence that went beyond the principle of perpetuating the concept of moral violence

against women to recognize one of its aspects as violence manifested by the use of the child conceived from matrimony as an instrument of aggression against the husband or the wife (decision of the judge of urgent matters on 20/8/2014).

It should be noted that this law has enhanced the interaction of the media with women's issues, and the issue of domestic violence is no longer confined to private family circles, but has become a general issue that concerns society and is punishable by law.

At the institutional level, this law has succeeded in activating the security institution's ability to deal with domestic violence. In this context, the Directorate of the Internal Security Forces has adopted a strategic plan for its work for the years 2018-2023, based on the principle of partnership with society and based on the principle of respect for human rights and protection of women from violence. It should also be noted that the Internal Security Forces, in coordination with NGOs, organize training sessions on best practices for the implementation of the Law 293. It also issued a service note on domestic violence issues, which specifies the duties and obligations of members of the internal security forces, their means of intervention to protect women, and due punishments in case of violating the content of this Memorandum in particular and Law 293 in general.

Based on the jurisprudence regarding the application of this law and the expansion of its interpretation to ensure the protection of women from violence in all its forms, the Ministry of Justice, the National Commission for Lebanese Women and KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation prepared and submitted a draft law amending Law No. 293. The proposed law was signed by ten Members of Parliament. On August 2, 2018, the Council of Ministers approved a bill aimed at amending the law protecting women and other family members from domestic violence as per the Ministry of Justice, according to the government statement.

- Penal Code: Abolition of Article 522

On August 16, 2017, the Lebanese Parliament abolished Article 522 of the Penal Code, which provided for the suspension of prosecution or execution of a court order if a true marriage was committed between the perpetrator of a crime (rape, abduction ...) and the victim. This law constitutes a major achievement in terms of protecting women from violence, especially those who, after being raped, are forced to marry the offender.

- The Code of Commerce

In the framework of the workshop launched by the legislator on the amendment and updating of the Code of Commerce, the new law No. 126 was issued to include several amendments, including the amendment of articles 625 and 626, which discriminate against women in the case of the bankruptcy of their husbands, as the amendment was to separate the financial liability between the spouses, thus recognizing the independent financial personality of the wife.

Articles 625 and 626 included the movable and immovable assets transferred to the wife during marriage, unless the wife provided evidence to the contrary. It was the wife's responsibility to

prove the source of the money that goes to the wife during marriage; that is, the presumption that the source of this money is "her husband's money." However, the recent amendments to articles 625, 626 and 627 were intended to ensure that the money of a non-bankrupt spouse, whether movable or immovable, remains outside the assets of bankruptcy unless proven otherwise. The legislator has also repealed the terms "the merchant's husband" and "the bankrupt wife" as "bankrupt" and "non-bankrupt spouse". The legislator also amended the title of the fifth part of the second book on bankruptcy from "the rights of the wife of the bankrupt" to "the rights of the spouse of the bankrupt".

- Municipalities Law

On the 17th of October, 2017, the Municipalities Law was amended by adding the provision of "the right of married women who have transferred records under their personal status to another municipality to run for municipal council where their names appear on the electoral list before marriage." This amendment allows a married woman who moves to live outside her own hometown to run for local and municipal elections in her place of birth.

- The personal status law of the Unitarian Druze Sect

In the year 2017, the personal status law of the Unitarian Druze Sect issued on 24<sup>th</sup> February, 1948 was amended in relation to:

- ✓ The issue of inheritance: If the deceased does not have male, but female, children, the child or children will be their own executors, and will inherit the entirety of the inheritance, after the owners receive their due. If they are divided, the shares shall be distributed equally.
- ✓ The issue of mahr (dowry): Determining how to calculate the value of the dowry specified in the paper currency when it is due, in terms of the number (ounces) of gold on the date of the contract in accordance with the requirements of the Bank of Lebanon. The receivable is payable in gold or in the equivalent of its value in the common circulated currency.
- ✓ Raising the age of custody for the mother from 7 to 12 for the boy and from 9 to 14 for the girl.
- ✓ Exercising the right of the judge to assign a psychologist or social worker with experience and competence to resolve issues between the spouses.
- ✓ The right to see the child: A paragraph was added to article 64 of the law that provided that one of the parents is not allowed to prevent the other from seeing the child and give the judge, in the absence of agreement between the parents, the authority to determine the place and time of seeing according to the interests of the child, but not less than once a week.

It should also be noted that the sectarian council of the Druze Sect, which has the authority to study, propose or amend bills related to the affairs of said community, has, since the last



elections, included 5 women in the General Assembly, including a woman who is also a member of the Board of Directors of the sectarian council.

- Laws that have an economic and social impact on women

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 2017, Law No. 46 was passed regarding "raising the minimum wage, salaries, and increasing the cost of living for employees, contractors and procedures in the public administrations, the Lebanese University, municipalities, federations of municipalities and public institutions not subject to the Labor Law, as well as the salaries of public administrative owners and members of the educational body in the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and military corps." Article 24 of the Act provides for the right of a married employee to take advantage of a part-time shift of up to three years during her period of service. However, this article added that the part-time shifts is calculated as half a year of actual service for graduation, compensation, pension or pension deductions.

- The decision to register Syrian refugees
  - Decision of the Council of Ministers issued on 8 February 2018 concerning the registration of Syrian births:

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 2018, the Council of Ministers approved Resolution 93, which called for the registration of any Syrian born in Lebanon, even if they exceeded the age of one year, in the Department of Foreigners and Foreigners' Affairs in the governorates from 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2011 until the date of issuance of this resolution. The decree also sent the birth certificates to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, which it reports to the relevant Syrian authorities, based on the book submitted by the Minister of State for Displaced Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants and the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. According to the decision, Syrian refugees no longer need a judicial decision to register their newborns who have reached the age of one year.

This decision contributed to the alleviation of the crisis of the accumulation of Syrians in Lebanon, without identification papers confirming their Syrian nationality, especially since a large number of Syrians entered Lebanon illegally or lost their identity cards due to the war in their country and it is difficult for them to obtain new documents, due to some of them opposing the Syrian regime, ergo, and the fear of entering the Syrian Embassy, in the absence of the cost necessary to resolve their situation or re-obtaining their identity papers, in addition to the lack of awareness of some of the displaced of the consequences of non-registration.

- Summarizing achievements and challenges

Achievements at the level of legislation generally, as well as the legislation relating directly to women and the betterment of their rights and status specifically, have contributed to the development of the legal situation and the promotion of respect for human rights. There is no doubt that this legislation plays a key role in changing the society's view on human rights issues, specifically women's issues, and considering that these issues affecting human rights are not a private matter, but rather a public one, the perpetrator should not be unpunished.

The general legal structures and frameworks that foster citizens' rights and frame their relationships should have a direct and indirect impact on the promotion and respect of women's rights. For example, the Right to Access Information Law should contribute to bridging the already existing gap between women and men in terms of access to resources, as well as The Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons Law, which is the result of the struggle of families, led by women, to demand the disclosure of the whereabouts of the abducted and forcibly disappeared.

However, the most important challenge on the legislative level is to analyze these laws through a gender lens to ensure that the different needs of women and men have been met, taking the conditions that may affect women more than men in most circumstances into consideration. An example is the application of the Right to Access Information Law, where women in remote areas face difficulty reaching the relevant public administrations to obtain the information required, or the Code of Commerce, which for the first time considers the commercial role of women as not just the wives of bankrupt merchants, but which requires the regulation of their rights in exchange for the rights of their husband's creditors.

The second challenge is the implementation of these laws through the issuance of executive decrees and the provision of adequate human and financial resources to ensure the effective implementation of rights. For example, the decree of forming the National Human Rights Commission was issued on May 21, 2018, which was not followed by the necessary executive steps to activate the work of the Commission in terms of monitoring the human and financial resources required to carry out its work.

As for legislations that directly affect the rights of women and their protection against violence, this legislation firstly contributed to the promotion of human rights through recognition and affirmation of the human rights of women; secondly, to change society's view of women's issues and consider them as priorities; and thirdly by enhancing the role of security and judicial institutions to intervene to protect women from violence. We referred above to the role of the courts in protecting women from domestic violence and the interaction of governmental institutions and associations to cooperate and initiate the preparation of a law to fill any gap in the legal text.

Regarding political participation, women achieved an important victory by amending Article 25 of Law No. 665 dated 29/12/1997, which was amended by Legislative Decree No. 118 dated 30/6/77 (Municipalities Law) by adding the provision that "the right of married women who have transferred records under their personal status to another municipality to run for municipal council where their names appear on the electoral list before marriage." (Official Gazette No. 49 dated 19/10/2017).

In Lebanon, women are registered under men's names (their fathers or husbands), which did not lead to women's membership of the municipal councils before the end of their term, as soon as they were married outside the area where they were elected. Consequently, women were not entitled to run for the municipal council in their place of birth altogether, and it was difficult to run for the municipal council where the registrations were transferred according to her marriage, because according to the prevailing culture she was considered "an outsider to the new society

and does not know much about the local affairs." In general, this law will promote the political activity of women as women have the freedom to run for municipal elections in their place of birth or where their records have moved according to their marriage. However, it is important to follow up on this issue through the upcoming municipal / local elections to gauge the impact of this amendment on Lebanese society to change the societal culture towards the candidacy of married women, whose registrations have been transferred to their place of birth.

Regarding economic participation, the stereotype that the basic role of women is limited to household tasks is still prevalent, and that her economic role is complementary to the economic activity of men in the family. Thus, the need to provide working women with flexible working hours is not considered as a priority, but instead women were provided the possibility of working part-time, which affects their income first and secondly their career advancement, as is the case with Law No. 46.

At another level, among the most important challenges facing the advancement of women and the promotion of their rights in Lebanese society was the series of extensions approved by the Parliament for itself, which spanned between 2013 and 2018, and witnessed a slow process of legislation, especially for laws that affect the human rights status. Reference must be made to the cultural obstacles that were manifested during the local elections, where some religious authorities declared that women should not be running for elections nor be elected.

In terms of protecting women against violence, despite the progress achieved, Lebanon has recorded a decline in the protection of women who have been raped. The abolition of the article that enshrined this practice was not enough, as its effects were transferred through the amendment of other articles of the Penal Code. (More details will be provided in the next paragraph).

Finally, it should be noted that there is no clear policy or strategy adopted when amending laws relating to women, especially in the Lebanese Penal Code, since legal amendments include certain legal articles without other relevant articles. In addition, some laws (the Penal Code, the Law on Punishing Human Trafficking) still have gaps in terms of defining and combating all forms of violence, protecting women from gender-based violence and providing protection measures for women survivors of violence.

#### B. At the strategic level

In addition to the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon adopted by the Council of Ministers on 12/8/2012, the Government of Lebanon has developed the following strategies over the last five years:

- National Gender Equality Strategy (2017-2030)

The Ministry of State for Women's Affairs (replaced by the Ministry of State for Economic Empowerment for Women and Youth) prepared the National Strategy for Gender Equality to accelerate the implementation of Lebanon's commitments to women's empowerment and gender

equality. The Strategy was based on the current National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2011-2021).

The areas of action of this strategy have been adapted to the strategic objectives of the new sustainable development plan for 2030 and Lebanon's global commitment to the goals of sustainable development.

The development of the National Strategy was based on the following international agreements: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and subsequent resolutions; Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; Paris Agreement on Climate Change; as well as the Concluding Observations of the CEDAW Committee on Lebanon's Reports on its Implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The national strategy covers 12 priority areas: poverty, legal reform, power and decision-making, education, the economy, gender-based violence, health, culture and information, environment, peace, security, crises and disasters, and institutional bodies.

The following action plans and programs have been prepared on the basis of the National Gender Equality Strategy.

- National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women and Girls (2019-2029)

The National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women and Girls which includes a definition of the term violence, as well as it identifies the mission and vision. A plan of action was also developed to implement the strategy.

This National Strategy targets all Lebanese women and girls and targets all women and girls on Lebanese soil. This strategy also targets men and young people, with the aim of raising their awareness to the damage regarding forms and types of violence against women and girls and their negative effects on the victim, family and society.

The National Strategy is based on defining its strategic objectives and priorities to the principle of "due diligence to eliminate violence against women (The 5Ps of the Due Diligence Principle), and the obligations it imposes on States to ensure prevention, protection, investigation, prosecution, punishment and compensation for victims.

Its strategic objectives are as follows:

- Strategic Objective 1: Effective protection of women and girls against all forms and types of violence; namely, to protect them in exercising their full, integrated, equal and undiminished human rights.

- Strategic Objective 2: Comprehensive and effective protection of women from gender-based violence that allows them to live in dignity and to enjoy a life free of violence or threats.
- Strategic Objective 3: Quick and effective response to the needs of women and children survivors of gender-based violence.

Each strategic objective includes several procedural objectives that define actions to be taken to combat violence against women and girls.

This document is of great importance as it was followed by a plan of action that identified indicators, activities, time frame and relevant entities for each strategic objective.

- The National Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism, approved by the Council of Ministers (dated 27/3/2018)

The National Strategy for Preventing Violent Extremism initially presented a general background to the reality of violent extremism in the Lebanese Republic, the reasons for its development and the steps it has taken to formulate it. It then stated the governmental pillars adopted by the strategy, its general framework and procedural definitions of violent extremism and its prevention, and the controls that were taken into account when it was developed. Finally, the document outlines the nine fields and areas of activity for the strategy agreed upon by the ministries. The document included nine strategic goals, the fifth of which dealt with gender equality and the empowerment of women. This goal aims to:

- Raising women's awareness on their constitutional and legal rights and the dangers of violent extremism at the individual and family level.
- Amending legislations relating to women to achieve justice and end discrimination against them.
- Encouraging women's participation in social, cultural and development activities.
- Encouraging women's participation in decision-making and policy-making.

The Council of Ministers approved the National Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism at its meeting held on 27/3/2018.

- National Youth Policy of 2018

The Ministry of Youth and Sports has prepared a National Youth Policy for 2018 to meet the current needs of young people in Lebanon. The policy focuses on alleviating obstacles related to internal migration from rural to urban areas, economic participation, employment capacity, social integration, political participation, education and health. Youth policy also focuses on changing

the Lebanese cultural values system to help ease sectarian divisions and promote the concept of citizenship.

- National Education Strategy 2014-2016 and providing education for all children in Lebanon 2016-2021

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has developed two strategies, "Providing Education for All Children in Lebanon 1" (2014-2016) and "Providing Education for All Children in Lebanon 2" (2016-2021) to meet the educational needs of Lebanese and non-Lebanese children and youth. The strategy of "Providing Education for All Children in Lebanon 1" aims to increase the enrollment of Lebanese children in schools after these rates have declined significantly as a result of the enrollment of Syrian children in public schools. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education provided exemptions for Lebanese children in order to increase their enrollment in public schools and opened classes in the afternoon to ensure the attendance of non-Lebanese children. The strategy of "Providing Education for All Children in Lebanon 1" also exempted non-Lebanese students from providing the necessary documentation.

The duration of the "Education for All Children in Lebanon 2" strategy covers five years and aims to increase and ensure equal access to education for all children and young people between the ages of 3 and 18 in Lebanon. The strategy includes three main goals: improving access to and improving quality of education, and strengthening the governance and management capacities of educational institutions to plan, budget, deliver, and monitor and evaluate services. The strategy also includes the development of revised curricula for schools to improve the quality of education, life skills and work capacity of children and young people. The development of life skills will include topics such as analytical thinking, problem solving, creativity, teamwork, tolerance, respect for pluralism and diversity.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education is developing a policy for the protection of children in public and private schools to monitor violence against children in schools and to develop protocols for early detection, preliminary evaluation and referral of cases of violence against children to the relevant authorities for follow-up.

- Strategy for Protecting Students in The School Environment

In 2017, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education launched a "Strategy for Protecting Students in The School Environment", which aims to protect school students from all kinds and forms of violence. This strategy is implemented at two levels: prevention and response. The strategy is in coordination with two ministries: the Ministry of Justice regarding sexual violence, and the Ministry of Social Affairs in child labor cases. This policy includes Lebanese students, students from Syria and other neighboring countries enrolled in official schools. This strategy provides prevention for students and students through raising awareness and educational guidance on violence, and providing a trained educational counselor at the school (currently in about 30 schools). It also provides response services through school visits and information on the existence of any violence within or outside the school, including domestic violence. Coordination with the Ministries of Justice and Social Affairs is being carried out in this area. While the Ministry of Education and Higher Education deals with cases of school violence, cases

of sexual violence are transferred to juvenile protection in the Ministry of Justice and child labor cases to the Ministry of Social Affairs.

Through this strategy, the Ministry of Education has been able to gather information on the number of cases of violence among Lebanese students and students displaced from Syria and other neighboring countries enrolled in public schools. On the other hand, the Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Lebanon, has completed a study of the factors that endanger boys and girls in vocational and technical schools. In addition to its work on the integration of gender concepts and violence based on it, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is considered the leading ministry in establishing a gender perspective unit that includes representatives from all departments and departments, and the Educational Center for Research and Development.

- **Mental Health Strategy**

Due to its interest in reproductive health, the Ministry has developed the Mental Health Strategy (2015-2020) and the National Strategy for Primary Health Care, including Reproductive Health and Family Planning, launched by the Ministry in January 2018 in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund in Lebanon. The projects implemented and those being implemented focused on mental health, physical and sexual violence, providing health coverage for the poor, providing treatment for cancer and chronic diseases, providing health and psychological care services for battered women, and developing the capabilities of service providers. It also focused on how to deal with survivors of sexual violence, referring them to relevant associations, providing equipment for a number of primary health care centers and hospitals to address rape cases and referring survivors to the relevant associations. Through its various projects, the Ministry provides a hotline to receive complaints about cases of violence against women and girls. Every year, national campaigns are carried out to raise awareness about certain diseases (breast cancer) and the importance of early detection, and free checks are provided in different areas.

- **Mental Health Strategy, Use of Addictive Substances (2015-2020)**

This strategy aims at developing a sustainable mental health system that ensures universal access to quality mental health treatment and prevention services through a high-quality approach based on scientific and multidisciplinary evidence with emphasis on community involvement, continuity of care, human rights and local culture.

### **Achievements and challenges**

Despite the importance of the Government's work in developing various strategies, it is necessary to point out that many lack the necessary action plans or resources to apply the objectives in a practical way that can be measured.

One of the main challenges facing the Government is to strengthen the role of the various national women's machineries. Coordination between these various bodies should be strengthened in order to unify efforts and achieve gender equality.

The Lebanese State faces other challenges: establishing clear mechanisms for enforcing laws, protecting female victims of domestic violence, sexual violence and human trafficking, developing strategies for the protection and integration of female prisoners and adopting clear mechanisms for amending and enacting laws regarding women in Lebanon.

Other challenges facing the Lebanese state are to protect women in Lebanon, to separate religion from the state, to remove the influence of clerics when amending laws and to pass laws protecting women and guaranteeing their rights. The role played by some clerics is to undermine initiatives meant to protect and redress women, particularly those relating to personal status laws, the issue of underage marriage and the protection of women from domestic violence.

## **Second: The international and regional context**

In addition to Lebanon's ratification of a number of international human rights conventions, the Government of Lebanon continues to implement its obligations to prepare and submit national reports to the international treaty committees, as well as the Universal Periodic Review report submitted by Lebanon in the second round in November 2015. The review concluded with a number of recommendations that the Lebanese state is working to implement, including interaction with the special procedures. Lebanon was one of the countries that adopted the Open Call for Special Procedures and facilitated the visit of all special rapporteurs on 17 March 2011, which witnessed a number of visits, including the visit of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief held between 23 March and 2 April 2015.

On the regional level, Lebanon interacts with the Arab Human Rights Committee or the so-called Charter Committee. In 2015, Lebanon presented its first report to the Charter Committee. Lebanon also adopted the "Cairo Declaration on Arab Women" which could be considered as "an agenda for Arab women beyond 2015". It covers political, economic, health and social fields as well as violence against women and violence in times of war and conflict.

### **2. Which of the following have been the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country over the past five years through laws, policies and/or programmes? (please check relevant categories)**

Successive governments continue to emphasize in their ministerial statements their will to promote the situation of women in Lebanon by emphasizing their commitment to the implementation of the "National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2011-2021)" to achieve equality between women and men.

Over the past five years, the Lebanese government has been dedicated to protecting women from violence. In addition to the Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence Law (No. 293), several legislators have proposed legislation to amend Law 293 and to combat sexual harassment in the workplace and in public spaces. Work is under way to amend legislations that contain discriminatory provisions against women and affect their economic and social lives.



Based on ministerial communiqué, the legislative activity during these past years, and the initiatives taken by the national women's machineries and civil society organizations, the following priorities can be identified:

1. Equality and non-discrimination under the law and access to justice

Over the past five years, the following laws have been proposed:

- Proposed law to repeal the provisions of adultery from the Lebanese Penal Code

Under Law No. 293, the provisions of the Penal Code (articles 487-488-489) were amended so that women and men were equal in the offense of adultery. However, since the issue of adultery was to be confined to divorce cases, MP Samy Gemayel proposed in 2016 a bill to abolish the crime of adultery.

- Proposed optional civil marriage law

In addition to several proposals and bills submitted over the past years, the Beirut Bar Association has prepared a bill on optional civil marriage in 2017.

The Minister of the Interior, Raya El Hassan, said after assuming her duty in 2019 that it was necessary to have a framework for civil marriage and that she would seek to open a serious and deep dialogue on this issue with all religious authorities and with the support of the Prime Minister. There have been reactions for and against this declaration, especially by clerics, who are mostly opposed to civil marriage. However, there are many demands by civil society organizations to adopt a civil law for legal status, which will contribute to the recognition and affirmation of the "citizenship" of women and give them full rights, especially with regard to legal status.

- Proposed law aimed at criminalizing marital rape

Two MPs, Sethrida Geagea and George Okais, submitted a bill that was registered in the Lebanese Parliament on 6/3/2019, which aims to criminalize marital rape as an act of aggression against the right to the integrity of the soul and the body, whoever the victim maybe. The amendment deals with articles 503 and 504 of the Penal Code. A husband who forces his wife by violence and threats to have sexual intercourse with her or with others for the purpose of gaining a material benefit or satisfying his wishes with others, shall be imprisoned from six months to two years, with increased punishment in the event of violence, or causing serious harm or if the wife cannot resist because of physical or psychological deficiency or because of pregnancy.

- Proposals to amend the Nationality Law

In the past two years, several parties have submitted draft laws / proposals to amend the Lebanese nationality law, including deputies, ministers and others. The Chairperson of the Committee on Women and Children in Parliament submitted a bill for the granting of Lebanese civil and economic rights on 9/4/2019.

On the basis of the mandate of the Prime Minister, the National Commission for Lebanese Women on 21/5/2019 submitted a draft law on nationality, which recognizes equality between mother and father in terms of the transfer of Lebanese nationality to children. The draft bill included administrative regulations for specific cases.

## 2. Eliminating violence against women and girls

It is a priority for the Government of Lebanon to eliminate violence against women and girls by proposing and adopting legislation and developing various strategies.

### At the legislative level

- Proposed law to amend the law protecting women and other family members from domestic violence

Based on the jurisprudence emanating from the implementation of the Law on the Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence, aiming at enhancing the protection of women from domestic violence, the National Commission for Lebanese Women, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and KAFA Enough Violence and Exploitation, proposed an amendment on Law No. 293. The bill was signed by ten deputies. Following the meeting of the Council of Ministers held on 2 August 2018, a bill was passed to amend the law on the protection of women and other family members from domestic violence as reported by the Ministry of Justice, according to the government statement after the meeting.

The most important amendments proposed in the law include the following:

- Adopt a definition of domestic violence based on abuse of power within the family.
- To consider the crime of domestic violence as a separate crime, thereby ensuring greater clarity in the legal text and greater applicability and punishment of all possible criminal consequences of domestic violence from murder, manslaughter, sexual exploitation and begging to repression and physical and moral abuse, to economic violence.
- Introduce the principle of specialization in prosecuting, investigating and ruling, which will lead to greater, more effective and faster protection for women and all members of the family from the violence committed against them.
- Adopt the age of puberty as a standard for protecting children from domestic violence and not the age of custody.
  - Proposals for the repeal of Article 518 and the amendment articles 518 and 519 of the Penal Code

On August 16, 2017, the Lebanese Parliament abolished Article 522 of the Penal Code, which provided for the suspension of prosecution or the suspension of execution if a valid marriage was concluded between the perpetrator of a crime (rape, abduction for marriage ...) and the victim (law n°53 of 14 September 2017), the effects of the repealed article have been transferred to article 505 when the elements of the offense specified in this article are available, i.e. in the case

of a minor who has completed the age of 15 and has not yet reached the age of 18. So that if the offender marries his victim, the prosecution or trial is stopped. Moreover, if a judgment is handed down, the execution of the sentence shall be suspended, provided that the decision of the suspension would be based on a report prepared by a social worker who takes into consideration the social and psychological conditions of the minor. The last amendment also retained the effect of the provisions of article 522 in relation to the offense provided for in Article 518 of the Penal Code so that all those who deflower a woman, whether adult or minor, via seduction or a promise to marry, in case of marriage, are exempted from punishment.

On 1 November 2017, the National Commission for Lebanese Women and the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs submitted a bill to amend these articles:

- Article 505 in order to tighten the penalty on the copulation of a minor and, repeal the suspension of the implementation of the provisions of this article in the event of a valid marriage.
- Repeal Article 518 for not imposing a penalty on a person who assaults a minor in the event of a valid marriage.
- Amend Article 519 to increase the punishment of anyone who touches or fondles a minor in an indecent manner and to repeal the requirement of consent from this article.
  - Proposal for a law to tighten penalties for murder, injury, abuse and beatings against women

A bill proposed by MP Elie Keyrouz for intensifying the penalties for murder, injury, abuse and beatings against women (articles 252 and 548 of the Penal Code), on 5 February 2018.

- Proposal for a law to amend Article 252 of the Penal Code.

On 5 February 2018, MP Elie Keyrouz proposed a bill aimed at amending Article 252 of the Penal Code to exclude from the provisions of this article those who committed murder, inflicted injury or harm to his wife, divorcee, sister, daughter, mother or any other woman who is a legal guardian. It also proposed amending Article 548 of the Penal Code in order to tighten the penalties for murder, injury, abuse and beatings of women in Lebanese society. The proposal represents an important step in the process of protecting women. It is true that the Lebanese legislator had repealed the text of article 562 of the Penal Code, which allowed the commutation of punishment for the so-called "honor killings," but not the text of article 252, which allows for the mitigation of punishment for the perpetrator of the crime he committed due to a state of extreme anger resulting from an unjust act.

- Proposals of laws aimed at establishing a minimum age for marriage

The number of marriages of children has increased due to the Syrian emigration to Lebanon since 2011. Several parties have initiated proposals and drafted laws to combat the phenomenon of marriage of minors.

Three parties (The National Commission for Lebanese Women, MP Elie Keyrouz - in cooperation with the Lebanese Women Democratic gathering - the "Kafa (Enough) Violence and Exploitation" Organisation - in cooperation with the Office of the Minister of State for Human Rights) have proposed bills. After the submission of these bills to the Parliament, a subcommittee was formed, in which representatives of these parties was formed to agree on a single version to be presented to the Parliament for discussion. The draft law was submitted to the Parliamentary Administration and Justice Committee.

- Proposed laws to combat sexual harassment

In 2017, the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs has prepared a bill aimed at punishing sexual harassment in the workplace and public places. At the same time, MP Ghassan Mukheiber submitted a bill to the Parliament. On 8/3/2017, the Government approved in its plenary session the draft law and referred it to the Parliament for approval. The Chairperson of the Parliament asked during a plenary session to form a committee to study the proposal of the two laws and agree on a unified format for discussion in plenary session.

#### At the strategic level

- Preparation of the national strategy to eliminate violence against women and girls

The Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (now the Office of the Minister of State for Economic Empowerment for Women and Youth) prepared the National Strategy against Violence against Women and Girls in Lebanon in February 2019. The Office of the Minister of State worked as part of a participatory approach that included academics, experts in the field of human rights, representatives of relevant government ministries and institutions, and civil society organizations, including youth organizations and associations active in Palestinian and Syrian refugee issues and UN agencies.

The strategy covers all forms of violence against a person by another or several persons from the immediate or extended family, or against a person who is not a relative residing in the same home, including domestic workers. Indiscriminate violence includes insults, threats, denial of education, discrimination in inheritance, forced or early marriage, forced labor, begging, sexual exploitation, non-consensual intercourse, prostitution, human trafficking, "honor killings", forced abortion, female genital mutilation, marital rape, and incest.

It is to be pointed out that this strategy has not yet been approved by the Council of Ministers.

For its part, the Ministry of Social Affairs worked on the following plans and strategies:

- Preparation of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Response to Child Marriage

During the year 2019, the Ministry of Social Affairs - the Higher Council for Childhood - started working on the preparation of the National Plan of Action for the Prevention and Response to Child Marriage. The plan is supposed to be shared by both the Ministries of Social Affairs and

Education and Health, with completion in September 2019. To date, the following activities have been implemented:

- Conduct research and prepare a paper on existing and simultaneous efforts to better understand child marriage in Lebanon by reviewing and identifying national strategies, frameworks and initiatives that support child marriage prevention and response, as well as regional or global strategies, frameworks and initiatives that can benefit or support such efforts.
- Organizing individual meetings with concerned bodies (ministries, civil and international associations ...) and issuing a preliminary report on the most prominent results.

The plan will include a monitoring, evaluation and costing plan for the next two years 2020-2021.

- Communication strategy for changing social behavior

In 2019, the Ministry of Social Affairs, in coordination with UNICEF, initiated the development of a social change communication strategy, which will include an innovative set of activities that will contribute to enhancing community awareness on issues of violence against women and children.

### 3. Political participation and representation

#### At the level of laws

- A new electoral law was passed

On 17/7/2017, Law No. 44, "Election of Members of the Parliament" was adopted, which for the first time adopted an electoral system on the basis of proportionality but did not include any quota for women at the level of candidacy or reserved seats.

The adoption of a law that adopts the proportional system in the legislative elections is considered as progress since it came after years of discussion to adopt the proportional system as the most representative system for the various social and political groups in Lebanon. However, this law did not include quotas for women. It is to be pointed out that several political parties have previously presented draft laws with quota for the sexes. They have also declared their support for the quota system to enhance women's political participation. Despite the absence of positive measures encouraging the candidacy and / or access of women to parliament, 111 women (48 women withdrew after the end of the deadline set to form the lists) presented their candidacy and 6 women were elected. However, when it comes to promoting women's political participation, it is important to approach the political structures where women are active: it is important to analyze the extent to which these institutions can provide a safe space for women to express their views and how safe they feel when accomplishing their mission.

- Proposing a law to exempt female candidates for parliamentary elections from paying nomination fees

On 8/3/2017, MP Samy Gemayel presented a bill aimed at exempting every Lebanese woman who is running for the parliamentary, municipal or elective general elections from the candidacy and electoral insurance fees, temporarily for two election sessions.

At the level of strategies

The National Commission for Lebanese Women worked on the development of the following strategies and action plans:

- Developing an action plan for the implementation of Security Council Resolution no.1325

In compliance with General Recommendation No. 30 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and according to the concluding observations of the Committee to the Lebanese State in 2015, and following the review of the national report and following its mandate by the Government of Lebanon, the National Commission for Lebanese Women launched the development of an action plan to implement resolution 1325. The Commission adopted a participatory approach with other government institutions and civil society organizations with the support of United Nations organizations to develop the National Action Plan (NAP).

Below is a brief description of the path followed by the National Authority to develop this plan:

In October 2017, a Steering Committee was established to develop the National Action Plan. The Steering Committee consisted of six ministries: the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, the Ministry of National Defense, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Social Affairs.

The Technical Advisory Board also included six United Nations Agencies: UN Women, who served as the secretariat of the Committee; the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the United Nations Development Program; the United Nations Population Fund; and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. The development of the NAP included a realistic analysis of national efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1325, which included best practices and lessons learned from other countries, including the review of national and local consultative meetings held at the national and local levels. During the year 2018, six sectoral meetings were organized with ministries, key institutions and civil society to develop the national plan of action. The National Commission submitted the plan to the Prime Minister awaiting its discussion and adoption by the Council of Ministers.

Among the most important elements of this plan are:

- Strategic Objective 1: Women's participation in decision-making at all levels

A priority for the national plan is to increase women's participation and representation in local and national governance structures and to take appropriate measures to increase their participation in the security and defense sectors. In the same context, the Plan notes the need to strengthen the role of women in conflict prevention, peace mediation and negotiations, as well as overcoming obstacles in order to facilitate women's access to economic resources to create favorable conditions consistent with the achievement of sustainable peace.

Among the desired outcomes of this objective:

- Increasing women's representation and participation in the defense and security sectors 1% annually.
- Increasing women's participation and leadership in political and public life at the local and national levels, and strengthening gender-sensitive institutions.
- Increasing participation of women in the economic sector through policy reform, a favorable environment, decent working conditions and protection measures, for women in both formal and informal sectors.
- Increasing participation of women in national dialogues, peace negotiations and mediation for peace, to promote dialogue and to ensure gender mainstreaming.

- Strategic Objective 2: Prevention of Conflict

This objective highlights the need to promote the role of women in conflict prevention, reducing tensions at the national and local levels, preventing violent extremism, and implementing early detection response systems.

Among the desired outcomes of this objective:

- Raising awareness and raising the capacity of relevant stakeholders on the role of women in peace building and conflict resolution.
- Reducing tensions among communities through dialogue, increasing the presence of female police officers and increasing trust between law enforcement officials and local communities through coordination and cooperation between the two parties.
- Preventing the proliferation of small firearms.
- Activating the role of women leaders in early detection systems to prevent conflict, violence and extremism.

- Strategic Objective 3: Prevention of and protection of women and girls from gender-based violence

This objective focuses on the protection of women, children, girls and boys from sexual and gender-based violence, discrimination, abuse and exploitative practices, including human

trafficking. This objective includes the adoption of laws to protect all women and children to ensure access to all multisectoral services, including shelter, access to justice and health services.

Among the desired outcomes of this objective:

- Providing an integrated and institutionalized protection system for female survivors of gender-based violence, by providing adequate capacity to protect women and girls from violence.
- Improving the capacity of the judiciary, security and health sectors to provide adequate protection for women and girls.

- Strategic Objective 4: Relief and Recovery

This objective focuses on the needs of women and girls in relief and recovery efforts related to natural disasters and conflicts.

Among the desired outcomes of this objective:

- Increasing participation of women in planning response efforts and relief operations.
- Protecting the rights of women refugees and promoting their access to economic opportunities in displaced / host communities.

- Strategic Objective 5: Normative Framework

This objective includes amending laws, legislations and policies that discriminate against girls and women, and providing the necessary means of implementation to protect them from all forms of violence and exploitation. Among these laws: Act No. 293 of 2014, adoption of a law on sexual harassment in the workplace and in the public spaces; adoption of a law to protect minors from early marriage; amending Act No. 164 of 2011 on trafficking to ensure greater protection for women and girls; amendment of the Labor Code to better protect female workers; amending the Social Security Law to better protect women; amending the Nationality Law granting Lebanese women equal rights to grant citizenship to their children; issuing and implementing the decision on compulsory education for young men and women up to the age of 16; and amending the provisions of the law pertaining to unregistered individuals.

4. Right to work and rights at work (e.g. gender pay gap, occupational segregation, career progression)

In principle, the civil servant code (which governs the public sector staff), as well as the labor law (which governs private sector employees) do not discriminate between men and women, especially in terms of wages between the sexes, or at the level of career advancement. However, in actuality, there is a discrimination between men and women in terms of the wage gap - especially in the private sector, women access to decision-making positions in enterprises and discrimination between different categories of female migrant and displaced workers.



Note Law No. 46 of 21 August 2017, which allowed married women working in the public sector to benefit from a part-time employment of up to three years during their period of service (see paragraph above).

- Proposals to amend the Social Security Law

Since 2011, national women machineries have been working on identifying the discriminatory provisions existing in the Social Security Law in order to propose new legislation guaranteeing gender equality to be submitted to the legislative authorities.

To date, a number of bills have been presented to amend the Social Security Law to eliminate discriminatory provisions against women, especially those relating to sickness and maternity, and family compensation. Some of these bills are still under consideration.

It is worth noting that the distinction between the male and female insured is reflected in the period of benefiting from maternity benefits. The wife of the insured benefits from maternity benefits three months after her husband's affiliation to the social security, while the female worker or employee does not benefit from these benefits until ten months after her affiliation. It is important to standardize the period of affiliation for the male and female insured to take advantage from maternity benefits.

The Social Security Law and the civil servants Co-operation Law treat women and men equally when it comes to certain social allowances, but these laws do not recognize that a female employee or a wage earner is the provider for her family as they deprive her of family allowance unless the husband's incapacity or absence is proved or if she is a widow.

In addition, the reproductive role of women in the social security law dominates their productive role. Article 50 of the social security law provides that "the female worker who leaves her work during the 12 months after her marriage) " is entitled to benefit from the end of service indemnity scheme.

The labor law does not include women working in the agricultural sector, which keeps women, as well as men, in the sector without health insurance or social benefits, and impedes their access to agricultural credit and other services they desperately need.

- Proposed law to determine parental leave

On 19/12/2017, the Council of Ministers approved a draft law submitted by the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs aimed at granting the father paternity leave, and was referred to the Parliament for discussion.

- The Situation of Women Migrant Domestic Workers

The Ministry of Labor has prepared a special bill on the regulation of decent work for domestic workers. This bill is still under consideration.

5. Unpaid care and domestic work / work-family conciliation (e.g. paid maternity or parental leave, care services)

- Proposed law aimed at granting the father a paternity leave

On 19 \ 12 \ 2017, the Cabinet approved a draft law submitted by the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs aimed at granting the father a paternity leave and referred it to the Parliament.

**3. Over the past five years, have specific measures been taken to prevent discrimination and promote the rights of women and girls who are subjected to multiple and complex forms of discrimination? (Please check the related categories)**

Female prisoners

Within the framework of the National Program for Social and Economic Development, the Ministry of Social Affairs carried out activities to improve the living conditions of the most vulnerable groups in society (women in prisons, their children and their families). Twelve social workers and 12 doctors (children, public health and legal midwives) were appointed to monitor the conditions of the prisoners and provide them with the necessary services.

Services provided to women prisoners, pregnant women, newborns and children:

- Conducting a periodic survey to monitor the needs of women's prisons.
- Receiving the inmates upon their arrival in the five prisons and filling out the social form containing their personal information and providing them with a package of personal items (soap, shampoo ...).
- Conducting psychosocial support sessions and awareness sessions on various social and health topics.
- Implementing a program of individual and collective intervention with the inmate pregnant mother about raising her child and preparing her for the stage of the child removal and following up the situation of children after removing them from their mothers (family or alternative pastoral institution).
- Following up on the health conditions of women in general and pregnant women and their newborn babies in women's prisons in particular, via visits by doctors and specialists of women and children, and providing the necessary vaccines and medicines.
- Providing basic needs (milk, diapers, clothes ...) for children who are arrested with their mothers.
- Following up on the family situation of some social cases after coordinating with female prison wardens and the relevant development services centers and some NGOs concerned with the issue of women's prisons.

Number of services provided to women prisoners, pregnant women prisoners, newborns and children until December 2015-2018:

<b>Name of prison</b>	<b>Reception services</b>	<b>Awareness sessions for detained women</b>	<b>Medical assistance for women</b>	<b>Medical, psychological, and social support for pregnant women</b>	<b>Medical assistance, basic materials and supplies for newborns and children</b>
Baabda	672	1061	645	21	94
Zahlé	495	998	477	12	26
Barbar Khazen	488	419	240	10	8
Tripoli	754	775		17	14
Dahr El Bacheq		61	47		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2409</b>	<b>3314</b>	<b>1409</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>143</b>

#### Women living in remote and rural areas

The situation of women in the countryside today is further complicated by the unprecedented flow dynamics of the displaced Syrians. The challenges faced by women in rural areas in Lebanon are particularly acute in the context of unequal gender relations, social and economic policies, legislative reforms and regional policies, as well as violence against women, and the required amendments to the law protecting women and all family members from domestic violence.

#### Women living with disabilities

Physical or mental disability is a heavy burden on Lebanese women and their families whether they are married, disabled, or disabled from birth. Disability affects the normal course of her life in education, work, marriage, and family rearing, as well as becoming dependent on needs that must be met, and such needs are linked to family circumstances, whether economically, socially or culturally. Women with disabilities face challenges and more difficulties than men in Lebanese society. Many women and girls are marginalized by the family, where they are often asked to serve themselves and fulfill their own needs. Some parents deny their existence due to embarrassment by their presence in social gatherings.

The Ministry of Social Affairs provides the disabled with a range of services:

- Issuing a disability card according to a specific system and under medical supervision.
- Supervision within specialized institutions.
- Benefit from the educational difficulties program.

- Utilization of adjacent services or aids.
- Issuing statements to the disabled, pursuant to Law 220/2000.

### Women living with HIV/AIDS

The Ministry of Public Health in Lebanon established the National AIDS Control Program in Lebanon (1989). The main aim of program was to reduce HIV and collect reported casualty statistics in coordination with ministries, non-governmental organizations, the media, religious leaders, United Nations agencies and other key relevant parties. The purpose of the statistics collection was to improve the situation of people afflicted with HIV / AIDS and to reduce its spread in Lebanon. Work on the program is ongoing, and the Ministry is providing free treatment in accordance with this national program and awareness of the disease. According to the program, HIV infection no longer means a death sentence. People who are infected can live a normal life if they take their medication regularly and follow the caregiver's instructions.

There is currently a bill on the rights and duties of persons living with HIV / AIDS, which was referred to the Joint Commissions on 30 April 2018.

### Women with diverse sexual orientations and gender identities

In light of the various problems that have been raised in the judicial system in recent years, the interpretation of the text of Article 534 of the Penal Code concerning the punishment of the unnatural copulation, which varied between the criminalization of homosexuality and the other rejects criminalization. On 28/01/2014, a decision was made to redefine the unnatural copulation and to acquit transsexuals, indicating progress in dealing with transsexuals or homosexuals, and to reconsider the interpretation of Article 534 of the Penal Code. It should be noted that the ruling was based on the principle of not expanding the interpretation of the Penal Code and was based on the Lebanese Constitution and the Bill of Rights on the need to ensure equality between individuals. The judgment also referred to the "Human Rights Council resolution of 17 June 2011, which for the first time clearly noted measures to address violations and discrimination against persons because of their sexual orientation and sexual identity, although not binding on Lebanon"

In the same context, in accordance with the rules and principles enshrined in the Lebanese Constitution and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in line with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, and in line with the above-mentioned UN Human Rights Council resolution, which established a framework to combat discriminatory practices and acts of violence against individuals due to their sexual orientation and sexual identity, while not binding on the members of the United Nations, including Lebanon, the Lebanese judiciary, in a ruling issued on May 5, 2016, interpreted the term "unnatural copulation" provided for in Article 534 of the Penal Code in a narrow interpretation, citing a review by the World Health Organization, which considered that homosexuality "in its individual manifestations, is not a disorder or disease and therefore does not require treatment". Consequently, the Lebanese

judiciary rejected the inclusion of sexual relations between two persons of the same sex within the crime of the unnatural copulation.

### Female refugees and homeless women

With regard to Palestinian refugees, they have been living in Lebanon for more than seventy years, but the Lebanese legislature has not yet provided them with a legal definition. They are administratively divided into three categories:

- Refugees registered with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities - Directorate of Political Affairs and UNRWA.
- Refugees registered with the Directorate of Political Affairs of the Lebanese Ministry of the Interior but not registered with UNRWA.
- Non-registered refugees neither in the State of Lebanon nor with UNRWA (without identity cards)

Recently, a fourth group, the Palestinian refugees from Syria, has been added.

In the absence of official statistics on the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, in partnership with the Lebanese Central Bureau of Statistics and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), initiated the comprehensive census of population and housing in the Palestinian camps and gatherings in Lebanon.

### Women in humanitarian situations

In 2015, the Government of Lebanon prepared a plan to respond to the Syrian crisis and addresses three areas:

- Provide material and legal assistance to the most vulnerable among the displaced from Syria and the poorest Lebanese.
- Linking vulnerable groups and locations to basic services and enhanced protection.
- Support national institutions to maintain social stability.

In 2019, Lebanon launched Lebanon's Response Plan to the Syrian Crisis of 2019. Lebanon's Crisis Response Plan (2017-2020) is the main tool to respond to the most pressing needs in Lebanon. In addition to providing protection and assistance to the most vulnerable groups, including Syrian refugees and Palestinian and Lebanese refugees, the plan also plays a key role in supporting and strengthening stability in Lebanon's public services.

Lebanon's crisis response plan includes more than 133 specialized partners working to provide assistance to 3.2 million needy people in Lebanon. In 2019, the plan aims to support 1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese, 1.5 million Syrian refugees and more than 208,000 Palestinian refugees. The Lebanese government works with UN agencies and local and international NGOs to provide protection and assistance to save families' lives, as well as to support the provision of public services throughout Lebanon.

The assistance provided through the US \$ 6.7 billion Lebanon Crisis Response Plan since 2013 has shown tangible results for Syrian refugees, and this year the plan will work to prevent deepening economic weakness. For the first time since the beginning of the crisis, the number of people living below the poverty line has dropped slightly to just under 70 percent. In 2018, 68 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 14 entered school, compared to 52 percent in 2016. Of the 54 percent of refugees who require primary health care, 87 percent of them have received it. And 85 per cent of Syrian refugees have access to basic drinking water.

**4. Has the increasing number of humanitarian crises—caused by conflict, extreme weather or other events—affected the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in your country?**

The situation of women in any society is influenced by the political framework, particularly by the crises that occur and which rearrange national priorities. Lebanon has suffered from a legislative crisis since 2012, which culminated in the repeated extension of the Parliament before the legislative elections in 2018. During this period, the legislative work was affected and the productivity of the legislator in regards to the adoption of laws that reinforce the human rights situation in Lebanon decreased. Moreover, the debate over the legal status laws or the right of Lebanese women to transfer their nationality to their families often revolves around in a vicious cycle. There are no real discussions about the need to pass a civil law on legal status that contributes to achieving equality between citizens.

In the same context, it is important to note the impact of stereotypes on men and women and the traditional distribution of tasks between them on the legislative process. Women's economic activity is treated as a complement to men's work within the family and thus measures are introduced that attribute household work to women and delay their career advancement.

At the political level, where the presence of women is weak, there are many speeches and statements supporting the rights of women. On the other hand, the historical gap between women and men is overlooked. Therefore, it is considered that women should be more active in reaching decision-making positions and therefore the quotas are considered as a gift for women, while they should be entitled to these positions.

In addition, it should be noted that since 2006 the Lebanese government operates according to the rule of the Twelfth in terms of the general budget, which affects the various programs implemented by the ministries, particularly the field of women's rights, as it is originally provided in the Public Accounting Act that the balance sheet is the balancing of articles, and thus, impossible to read from a developmental perspective or from a gender perspective. Whereas the global budgets are being used based on programs that clearly show the commitment of governments to promote human rights, specifically equality between men and women.

At the policy level, strengthening the situation of women is directly linked to strengthening the capacity of national women machineries by strengthening their capacities at the level of human or financial resources. The budget of the National Commission for Lebanese Women is on a

continuous decline. On the other hand, the establishment of the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs by decree does not entail a decision to transfer it by law to a ministry with a clear budget in order to carry out its tasks.

In addition, in terms of monitoring the situation of women in Lebanon and the extent of progress, despite the efforts of the Central Administration of Statistics, official figures and statistics are still absent and therefore it is impossible to develop a clear perspective of a government vision that contributes to improving human rights conditions.

On the regional level, Syria's civil war, nearly one million Syrian refugees seeking asylum in Lebanon, and the inability of the Lebanese Republic's infrastructure to absorb this number must be mentioned.

**5. Which of the following does your country consider to be the top five priorities for accelerating progress for women and girls in your country for the coming five years through laws, policies and programmes? (please check relevant categories)**

Based on the above, we find that the priorities of the Lebanese government focused on the legislative reforms and the development of policies aimed at enhancing the situation of women, with modification / adoption being one of the most prominent demands of national bodies and civil society organizations. Legislative reforms constitute the basic framework through which equality between men and women is achieved. In the coming years, it is necessary to review all other laws and regulations, including those that have already submitted projects and proposals for approval, to the various legislative authorities.

It is most appropriate to review all the laws of the 1940s and 60s, the most important of which are the Penal Code, the Labor Law and the Social Security Law, within a comprehensive approach that revisits, with the spirit of the law, the aforementioned laws as a whole and reflects the modern roles of women, including the productive role, for a large number of women are active in the economic sphere and become their families' providers. At the level of the Penal Code, the stereotypical view of society's attitude towards women, which sometimes permits acts of violence against women, must be changed. A gender-based analysis of each law, which is discussed by the legislative authorities but does not appear to directly affect women's issues and enhance their status, is necessary (see the paragraph regarding The Right to Access Information Law).

Highlighting women's issues in all media (traditional and modern) and the impact generated by public opinion prompted legislators to initiate / adopt draft laws / proposals to end discrimination against women. This requires a plan to push forward the process of passing these laws to ensure respect for and promotion of women's rights. More recently, a public debate has been launched on the need for a unified civil law on personal status as a key entry point for the full citizenship of women and men. However, in light of the general debate on this issue and the difficulty of achieving it in the near future, it is necessary to pursue efforts to amend other laws that affect the situation of women in various fields.

At the strategic level, strategies must be adopted first by the Council of Ministers and circulated to all ministries and official departments. It is also necessary to support the implementation of the national plans and to provide adequate budgets for the implementation of the activities proposed in the various national plans adopted for the application of the strategies. These include supporting women's access to decision-making positions and ensuring their effective participation. Appropriate measures must be taken to increase women's participation in various local and national governance structures, particularly in the security and defense sectors. Economic programs aimed at enhancing the participation of women actors must also be developed, in order to create favorable conditions for sustainable peace (an action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325).

In terms of political participation, it is necessary to build on the recent reform of the system, by adopting the proportional system for the recent electoral law to be supplemented in the future by a quota provision, even if temporarily, to support women's access to decision-making positions in order to achieve representative justice. Parallel to these legislative reforms, it is necessary to encourage political parties, especially at the leadership level, to nominate women to run for local and national elections.

In the fight against violence, appropriate measures must be taken to eliminate gender-based violence and protect women and girls from it. These measures include removing discrimination against women from laws to protect women and girls, and taking the necessary actions, such as the promotion of protection measures against violence by adopting modern means and tools that enable the judiciary and internal security bodies to ensure the safety of women and girls.

#### Undertaking structural / institutional reforms

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action referred to the need to establish national mechanisms to strengthen the situation of women in all fields, and to provide appropriate staff elements within and among ministries in order to enable them to carry out their functions. Since its creation in 1998, the National Commission for Lebanese Women has worked to establish a network of gender-based focal points in public administrations and institutions to work towards integrating the gender perspective into the policies and programs of these departments. As a result of this effort, some ministries have sought to establish gender committees from various departments / departments of the Ministry to promote the mainstreaming of the gender perspective.

These tools did not produce the desired results fully, and therefore had to be reviewed and analyzed for difficulties that had prevented the attainment of the objectives set forth in the Beijing Platform for Action. The National Commission for Lebanese Women has started to adopt a new tool based on an examination of the gender mainstreaming of institutions. This tool requires the consideration of the structure and culture of the institution to assess the extent to which the principles of equality are integrated, to monitor loopholes and best practices, and build upon them in order to draw the necessary recommendations and submit them to the relevant institution. This tool contributes to strengthening the capacity of national mechanisms to propose



new approaches when planning policy development and developing legislative texts that contribute to the advancement of women and the elimination of gender discrimination.

In the same context, it is necessary to transform public administrations into safe / women-friendly spaces that provide women with an opportunity to reconcile their household and productive roles. In this regard, it is possible to build on some of the measures taken by the Public Security Directorate to establish nurseries. It is necessary to work on the development and generalization of these initiatives and support them through the issuance of laws and regulations devoted on the one hand, and through the monitoring of a special budget within the general budget to support the infrastructure, to allocate to nursing homes or women-friendly sections within ministries, public administrations, municipalities ...

Legislative reforms and structural regulations must be complemented by a cultural framework that promotes community awareness of equality. In this regard, discrimination and gender stereotypes in curricula, textbooks and training materials for all educational institutions must be removed. Efforts must also be made to ensure equal access to said curricula, textbooks, and materials for boys, girls, men and women at all levels of education, skills, development and vocational training.

As for the role of the media in supporting women's issues and the role played by the media in the formation of public opinion and in the dissemination of culture and awareness, the importance of networking the media with its institutions and cadres with the national and governmental bodies is highlighted in order to promote a balanced and non-stereotyped image of men and women, and to eliminate negative gender stereotypes in the media and advertising. There is also a need to adopt general principles committed by all media outlets to enhance the image of women in the media and to combat the mismanagement of women.

In this context, there is a clear political will to reflect the Government's commitment to support the capacities of the various national mechanisms established by the Government of Lebanon, and to strengthen coordination among them on the one hand and between the official departments on the other, to achieve the strategic objectives of gender mainstreaming in all policies and programs. It is also necessary to allocate adequate resources to enable these national mechanisms to play their part.

## **Section II: Progress across the 12 critical areas of concern**

### **Inclusive development, shared prosperity and decent work**

#### **6. What actions has your country taken in the past five years to promote gender equality in relation to the role of women in paid work and employment?**

- Strengthened / enforced laws and workplace policies and practices that prohibit discrimination in the recruitment, retention and promotion of women in the public and private sectors, and equal pay legislation
  - Please see the paragraph on draft laws and proposals to amend discriminatory provisions in the Social Security Act
  - Please see the paragraph on a draft bill to criminalize sexual harassment in the workplace and public places
  - Please see the paragraph on a bill authorizing paternity leave
- Introduced / strengthened gender-responsive active labour market policies (e.g. education and training, skills, subsidies)
  - n/a
- Taken measures to prevent sexual harassment, including in the workplace
  - Please see the paragraph on a draft bill to criminalize sexual harassment in the workplace and public places
- Strengthened land rights and tenure security
  - n/a
- Improved financial inclusion and access to credit, including for self-employed women
  - n/a
- Improved access to modern technologies (incl. climate-smart technologies), infrastructure and services (incl. agricultural extension)

The Ministry of Agriculture, in collaboration with international organizations, has implemented a number of projects focusing on enhancing the role of women in agriculture, including the project with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), with some 1,300 women benefited from material and technical support over the last five years.

On the subject of access to modern technologies, the Department of Rural Engineering is following several courses on the subject of smart climate technologies. About 50% of the participants in these courses by the Ministry are women. The percentage of participants in

workshops targeting technicians and engineers ranges between 50 and 65%. However, the percentage of women participating in workshops on modern irrigation methods does not exceed 20%.

In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture received support from the Italian Government in 2015 for the implementation of the project "Promoting gender mainstreaming in sustainable rural development and food security measures", which aims to integrate gender into the Ministry's policies and programs.

This project aims to:

- Promote women's sustainable participation in key agricultural value chains
  - Increase the knowledge and technical capacity of staff and decision makers of the Ministry of Agriculture, at the national and local levels, on gender equality (training of 100 staff)
  - Empowering women in sustainable agriculture and / or rural development (training 100 rural women on capacity building, communication skills and food processing)
  - Develop a set of indicators to generate gender-based data in agricultural field studies and surveys
- Supported the transition from informal to formal work, including legal and policy measures that benefit women in informal employment
    - n/a
  - Devised mechanisms for women's equal participation in economic decision-making bodies (e.g. in ministries of trade and finance, central banks, national economic commissions)
    - n/a
  - Other

In this context we mention the study of the gender wage gap currently being prepared by the Office of the Minister of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth

The Office of the Minister of State for Economic Empowerment for Women and Youth is currently preparing a study on the gender wage gap in partnership with the UNDP project in the Ministry of Finance. This study aims at identifying the distribution of labor between the gender in Lebanon by age, gender, sector, governorate and knowledge of wage differences between the genders through the wage database in the Ministry of Finance. It also aims to draw up recommendations to address gender inequality.

**7. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to recognize, reduce and/or redistribute unpaid care and domestic work and promote work-family conciliation?**

- Included unpaid care and domestic work in national statistics and accounting (e.g. time-use surveys, valuation exercises, satellite accounts)
  - To date, unpaid care and domestic work are not included in national accounting. Based on the results of the 2012 Living Conditions Survey conducted by the Central Bureau of Statistics, 59% of women between the ages of 15 and 64 are not ready to work, because they are assigned to domestic work.
- Expanded childcare services or made existing services more affordable

The Government of Lebanon has adopted a poverty reduction policy through its adoption of the National Poverty Targeting Program, which measures the level of poverty of families by assessing the socio-economic situation through 62 indicators / databanks that are declared by a family representative. During the implementation phase (2011-2013), 36,575 families (171,903 persons) were classified as falling below the poverty line and thus could benefit from the program.

In 2011, the Ministry of Social Affairs began implementing this program and worked to issue cards to the poorest families to help them obtain some free or symbolic health, social and educational services such as full health coverage in public and private hospitals (30 government hospitals and 46 private hospitals), covering the cost of medicines for chronic diseases, the free registration of pupils in public schools, the provision of free textbooks for them, the provision of a food basket if the head of the household is over 60 years of age and has no work and his or her family members are less than 3 persons (Cabinet decision of 23 November 2011).

- Expanded support for frail elderly persons and others needing intense forms of care

The Ministry of Social Affairs covers some of the contributions to care for the elderly, the poor and the marginalized. For example, about 1,131 elderly people benefit annually from the care services provided by 31 institutions for the residence service (shelters). Approximately 13,731 elderly people benefit annually from the care services provided by 58 day-care institutions (day clubs). Some 7,952 elderly people benefit annually from the pastoral services provided by 74 foreign and domestic service institutions. Approximately 3,934 elderly people benefit annually from the services of 41 restaurants serving hot meals. One thousand elderly people benefit from the marginalized support program of the Caritas Association, which provides care and development services and monthly financial assistance with the support of the Ministry of Social Affairs (2012 and 2013 statistics).

In another context, the Ministry of Social Affairs has worked with the Permanent National Authority for the Care of the Elderly to set standards for raising the quality of services provided to older persons in institutions whether for the resident or day-to-day service, and to develop a directory for all institutions of the elderly in Lebanon, whether contracted by the Ministry or not (127 institutions).

The early detection of Alzheimer's disease was also carried out, orientation meetings on the disease and ways of caring for patients were held, as well as informative information booklets on the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease were distributed.

A literacy guide entitled "Life Skills" has been developed that addresses a range of information that develops the knowledge of older persons and facilitates their positive engagement with the challenges of daily life and improving their intellectual, physical and psychological conditions.

It should be noted that the Ministry of Social Affairs had launched the National Development Strategy, which was based on the following objectives:

- a. To promote social development and improve social conditions as a fundamental principle in the formulation and application of social, economic and financial policies in various sectors affecting the lives of citizens and in the quality, effectiveness and yield of service
- b. Emphasize the right to quality health care for all individuals and families through the intensive work on planning and achieving fairness in health services, improving the quality of official health institutions, improving health indicators and reducing disparities between regions
- c. To build and expand social safety nets to protect the most marginalized groups by adopting the principle of development not only between different Lebanese regions, but also to expand it to be a development for everyone, including support for the right of persons with disabilities to benefit from different social protection networks
- d. Adopting a national educational policy based on the principles of eliminating discrimination and the right to education for all, improving the quality of formal education, providing opportunities for integration, and promoting citizenship, democracy and human rights culture
- e. Provide decent, productive and safe employment opportunities in line with individual, community, technical and educational qualifications and skills, without any discrimination on the basis of sectarianism or physical disability. Employment should target the most marginalized and poor groups, including women, youth and labor with limited skills
- f. Adopt social and economic development policies commensurate with the principle of sustainable development, proper management of natural resources, enforcing environmental protection laws based on coherence in economic and environmental policies and examining the underlying causes of environmental resource degradation, particularly socio-economic ones, and proposing solutions, processes, and mechanisms that allow for the conservation and rational use of these resources in improving the standard of living, especially for the poorest and low-income communities.

- g. Implement the integrated land use guidelines in coordination and cooperation between the various departments and adopt the development plans at the level of districts, federations and municipalities so as to benefit from the added value that characterize the various Lebanese regions.
- Introduced or strengthened maternity/paternity/parental leave or other types of family leave
  - Please see the paragraph on the introduction of a bill to recognize paternity leave.
- Invested in time- and labour-saving infrastructure, such as public transport, electricity, water and sanitation, to reduce the burden of unpaid care and domestic work on women
  - n/a
- Promoted decent work for paid care workers, including migrant workers
  - n/a
- Conducted campaigns or awareness raising activities to encourage the participation of men and boys in unpaid care and domestic work
- Introduced legal changes regarding the division of marital assets or pension entitlements after divorce that acknowledge women's unpaid contribution to the family during marriage
  - n/a
- Other

**8. Has your country introduced austerity/fiscal consolidation measures, such as cuts in public expenditure or public sector downsizing, over the past five years?**

Yes

If yes, have assessments been made about their impact on women and men, respectively?

- No, the impact on women / men was not assessed.

**Poverty eradication, social protection and social services**

**9. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to reduce/eradicate poverty among women and girls?**

- Promoted poor women's access to decent work through active labour market policies (e.g. job training, skills, employment subsidies, etc.) and targeted measures
  - n/a

- Broadened access to land, housing, finance, technology and/or agricultural extension services

The Ministry of Agriculture implements its strategy for the years 2015-2019 and the resulting plans and programs financed by its own budget and with the support of the United Nations agencies FAO, EU, Italian Cooperation, Government of Canada, UK and the Netherlands UNICEF "AVSI", with the aim of improving farm incomes, agricultural cooperatives and livelihoods for men and women. Municipalities and non-governmental organizations played a role in the implementation of a number of activities and benefited 1,300 women from the services and equipment provided by the ministry and the Food and Agriculture Organization.

The Department of Counselling and Education cooperated with all the municipalities surrounding the agricultural schools affiliated with the Ministry of Agriculture, as well as the municipalities of Rachaiya district, and conducted professional courses on: landscaping, beekeeping, basics of agriculture, pruning and vaccination, civil agriculture, thyme cultivation and aromatic plants, cultivation of pine and avocado, of apples and post-harvest practices, cultivation of olives and post-harvest practices, nurseries, self-safety and professional life skills, literacy, flower coordination, vegetable farming, field crops, garden maintenance, animal production, poultry, cultivation of grapes, producing mortar, and propagating the village heritage, extraction of essential oils ..... The duration of the training ranged from 40 hours to 120 hours distributed to the theoretical and practical work and benefited the neediest youth in rural areas of the age group ranging from 15 And 25 years.

More than 2,000 students were trained in equal ratios. In Rachaiya district, only 120 women were trained in the “learn for work” project.

Refer also to the section on improving access to modern technologies, infrastructure and services.

- Supported women’s entrepreneurship and business development activities

The Ministry of Agriculture encourages Women to launch and support food industry projects. The Ministry of Agriculture, through the Food Processing Department, carries out training courses on food safety. Women working in agriculture are also encouraged to launch projects for the food industry through programs funded from abroad that support women in rural areas and to allocate programs and grants for their economic empowerment, such as the “project to support cooperatives and women's cooperative societies in the food and agriculture sector in Lebanon.” The Ministry is also implementing a promotional plan for the Lebanese food products, namely the Lebanese mortar through the establishment of the days of the mortar in a number of countries and participation in a number of exhibitions locally and internationally.

The Ministry is also working on developing the capacities of women working in agriculture to improve the quality of the product according to the needs of the market, based on a number of studies. And encourages the adoption of marketing standards, including the adoption of trade labels to identify the product and increase the value added in line with the market.

The Ministry of Agriculture signed an agreement with the Kfalat Foundation to support women and young people to obtain soft loans through the "Loan for Agriculture and Rural Development" program.

For its part, within the framework of the Host Communities Support Project, the Ministry of Social Affairs implemented some 300 small and medium-sized enterprises and women's food processing cooperative societies with the aim of creating employment opportunities for women. This project was implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) between 2014 and 2016.

- Introduced or strengthened social protection programmes for women and girls (e.g. cash transfers for women with children, public works/employment guarantee schemes for women of working-age, pensions for older women)
  - n/a
- Introduced/strengthened low-cost legal services for women living in poverty

The Lebanese state is not concerned with the provision of free legal services. It is the role of the lawyers' associations in Beirut and the North through the Judicial Aid Committee, where legal aid is provided to the disabled under certain conditions. In addition, a number of NGOs have programs funded to provide free legal services, which include legal advice, legal representation before the courts, and legal awareness. Some ministries providing services to women and girls refer cases to NGOs for follow-up. The main challenge facing associations as well as the ministry is the lack of continuity of funds in support of legal services.

**10. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve access to social protection for women and girls?**

- n/a

**11. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to improve the health outcomes of women and girls?**

- Promoted women's access to health services through expansion of universal health coverage or public health services

The interest in reproductive health in Lebanon is clear through what the Ministry of Public Health offers. The Ministry of Public Health has developed a national strategy for primary health care, including reproductive health, which has been worked out with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Lebanon, and has also prepared the clinical work manual for reproductive health services.

The Ministry of Public Health provides basic health care services such as maternal and child care, compulsory vaccination and health guidance. The Ministry of Public Health also provides basic vaccines free of charge in all its clinics and health centers (Ministry of Public Health



Circular No. 33 of 6 July 2004). The mammography procedure is also mandatory for every woman who enters the hospital for treatment at the expense of the Ministry of Public Health if said procedure has not been done during the 12 months preceding her hospitalization (Ministry of Public Health Circular No. 90 of 12 October 2010). The Ministry of Public Health also provides coverage for all open-heart surgery and the cost of medicine for chronic diseases.

The Ministry of Social Affairs, through development service centers and associations contracted with the Ministry, provides health services, including pediatrics, gynecology, public health and dentistry, as well as annual vaccination campaigns. These services are offered at a nominal cost to help all segments of society, especially poor and marginalized groups, to access basic health services.

- Expanded specific health services for women and girls, including sexual and reproductive health services, mental, maternal health and HIV services

Due to its interest in reproductive health, the Ministry has developed the Mental Health Strategy (2015-2020) and the National Strategy for Primary Health Care, including Reproductive Health and Family Planning, launched by the Ministry in January 2018 in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund in Lebanon. The projects implemented and those being implemented focused on mental health, physical and sexual violence, providing health coverage for the poor, providing treatment for cancer and chronic diseases, providing health and psychological care services for battered women, and developing the capabilities of service providers. It also focused on how to deal with survivors of sexual violence, referring them to relevant associations, providing equipment for a number of primary health care centers and hospitals to address rape cases and referring survivors to the relevant associations. Through its various projects, the Ministry provides a hotline to receive complaints about cases of violence against women and girls. Every year, national campaigns are carried out to raise awareness about certain diseases (breast cancer) and the importance of early detection, and free checks are provided in different areas.

The ministry has succeeded in reducing maternal mortality rates and infants under-five mortality rates below those called for by sustainable development goals by 2030. It is also seeking to integrate the "clinical management of rape" into primary care centers.

With regard to HIV, please refer to the above paragraph on the national AIDS program and the proposed law on the rights and duties of people living with HIV / AIDS.

- Undertaken gender-specific public awareness/health promotion campaigns

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education carries out activities to raise awareness among secondary school students about the negative effects of drugs and prevention measures. Basic education students are also aware of the dangers of drugs.

- Strengthened comprehensive sexuality education in schools or through community programmes

As of 2003, the Reproductive Health Centers started an educational project for adolescents concerned with sexual education and protection against sexually transmitted diseases through educational courses for Lebanese youth and the production of educational films and booklets that adolescents themselves participated in releasing them.

**12. What actions has your country taken in the past five years to improve the outcomes and skills of educating women and girls?**

- Strengthened educational curricula to increase gender-responsiveness and eliminate bias, at all levels of education

In this context, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education is implementing a number of programs, including awareness programs on: child marriage hazards, the importance of adhering to various disciplines such as STEM, technology, professions for boys and girls, and the need to make all professions available for both sexes. The ministry launched a policy of protecting students in the school environment.

- Provided gender equality and human rights training for teachers and other education professionals

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education organizes awareness meetings for counselors, teachers and the staff of the educational sector on gender equality (in educational integration and access to learning and education). This is in addition to the training courses conducted by the Educational Center for Teachers on gender issues.

- Promoted safe, harassment-free and inclusive educational environments for women and girls

The Ministry of Education has launched a policy of protecting students in the school environment, which work at two levels: prevention and response.

- Prevention: It includes the implementation of descriptive and extracurricular activities that affect the basic skills of child development
- Response: The Ministry works to establish mechanisms for the referral and follow-up of cases of harassment

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education has also established a comprehensive education unit for Syrian students, which deals with all their educational, psychological and physical matters.

- Other

In order to guarantee the right of students who are Lebanese through their mothers to education, the following measures have been taken to ensure:

- Equality between Lebanese students and students who are Lebanese through their mothers, who are interested in applying for the National Higher Institute of Music
  - o In 2018, the Minister of Culture issued a decision to implement the principle of equality between Lebanese students and students who are Lebanese through their mothers, who are interested in applying for the National Higher Institute of Music.
- The equality of Lebanese students who are Lebanese and students who are Lebanese through their mothers to enroll in public schools
  - o In 2018, the Minister of Education and Higher Education issued a decree requesting that the official schools and high schools take appropriate measures to register non-Lebanese students born from Lebanese mothers, same as Lebanese students.

### **Freedom from violence, stigma and stereotypes**

#### **13. In the last five years, which forms of violence against women and girls, and in which specific contexts or settings, have you prioritized for action?**

- Intimate partner violence/domestic violence, including sexual violence and marital rape

Please refer to the paragraph concerning the adoption of Law 293 and the proposed amendments which include the criminalization of marital rape

- Sexual harassment and violence in public places, educational settings and in employment

The Labor Code and the Lebanese Penal Code do not address the issue of sexual harassment. The Lebanese Labor Code did not define sexual harassment and did not use the term originally. However, the penal code includes the punishment of criminal acts, including the description of sexual harassment, such as articles 385, 507, 519, 532. Although there is no direct provision criminalizing sexual harassment, the criminal judiciary has separated many files that qualify as harassment. Suggestions and draft laws were submitted to discuss the inclusion of sexual harassment in the Penal Code. (For more details please see the paragraph above on the proposed legislation to combat sexual harassment)

- Child, early and forced marriages

Please see the paragraph on draft laws against child marriage

- Trafficking in women and girls

Pursuant to Lebanon's accession to the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and to the enactment of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2014, the Government

issued a ministerial decree in 2014 establishing an anti-trafficking office in the Directorate of Security Forces to conduct investigations into human trafficking.

On 25/9/2017, a service note No. 339/204, 4 dated 25/09/2017, was issued for dealing, and investigating the crimes of human trafficking and sexual assault crimes and providing support to their victims. These procedures were developed as part of a joint project in partnership with ABAAD and in coordination with UNICEF and UNHCR. These are standard operating procedures in this area, coupled with the approval of the Public Prosecutor's Office and are binding on all investigators. It deals with all techniques required to detect trafficking crimes, as well as focusing on children and providing all support to asylum seekers through the UNHCR, as well as the necessary health, psychological and social services.

The Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces also cooperated with several international organizations and civil society organizations to train 1500 members of the Internal Security Forces on dealing with and investigating crimes of human trafficking and crimes of sexual assault, and providing support to their victims.

The Office also participated in developing the practical guide and indicators of the crime of human trafficking. It also participated in the production of an awareness film on the rights of trafficking victims.

- Other

It is useful to mention some measures taken to lift discrimination against women:

- Stating the mother's name and surname on Lebanese passports

In 2017, at the request of the National Commission for Lebanese Women, the Director General of Public Security decided that the mother's name and surname must be registered on the passports.

- Adding the names of children of divorced women on their family registration data:

On 29/8//2018, the Director General of Personal Status issued a memo concerning the inclusion of observations and the issuance of statements of restrictions on the children of divorced women, When the divorced Lebanese woman is re-enrolled in the family registry, the names of her children and their registration number are entered in the notes section after communicating with the concerned registry.

The divorced Lebanese woman, if she wishes, shall be given a statement stating the names of her children from her divorced Lebanese husband if there is more than one divorce, provided that the application is submitted directly to the Registrar of the Legal Status by the divorced woman or her legal representative.

#### **14. What actions has your country prioritized in the last five years to address violence against women and girls?**

- Introduced or strengthened violence against women laws, and their enforcement and implementation

Please refer to the paragraph on the proposal to amend the law "Protecting women and other family members from domestic violence".

- Introduced, updated or expanded national action plans on ending violence against women and girls

Please see the paragraph on the development of national action plans and strategies to combat violence against women and girls

The strategy prepared by the Ministry of Social Affairs for the Protection of Children and Women should be stated. During the year 2019, the Ministry of Social Affairs completed the preparation of a draft strategic plan for the protection of children and women, which includes the ministry's priorities and vision at the level of:

- Strengthening the enforcement of the legal framework for the protection of children and women in Lebanon
  - Developing the Ministry's institutional capacities (human resources - procedures, infrastructure and logistics)
  - Developing and ensuring the quality of child and women protection services
  - Behavioral and social change for the protection of children and women from gender-based violence
  - The plan includes a monitoring, assessment and costing plan for the next two years 2020-2021.
- Introduced or strengthened measures to increase women's access to justice (e.g. establishment of specialist courts, training for the judiciary and police, protection orders, redress and reparations, including for femicide cases)

The National Commission cooperated with various civil society organizations to conduct workshops with judges, especially judges of urgent matters at each new appointment, in order to present the most prominent jurisprudences issued following the implementation of Law No. 293 (Protection of Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence).

It should be pointed out that on 27/11/2017, the Criminal Court in Beirut issued a ruling prohibiting the punishment of a woman forced to practice prostitution by her husband. It was the first judicial ruling to exempt a victim of sexual exploitation from punishment. This provision indicates a change in the approach of the Lebanese courts to the concept of the criminal will of women who are exploited for prostitution. In addition to the existence of several files under consideration regarding the subject of human trafficking before the criminal courts in Lebanon and investigating judges.

- Introduced or strengthened services for survivors of violence (e.g. shelters, help lines, dedicated health services, legal, justice service, counselling, housing)

In the context of combating gender-based violence, measures have been taken over the past years to implement the following measures:

- Completion of the national standard operating procedures on gender-based violence draft

During 2018, the Ministry of Social Affairs, in partnership with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, prepared the national standard operating procedures for gender-based violence. These procedures included a definition of the parties that are to enforce the procedures, guidelines for action against gender-based violence, guidelines for case management, and a system and pathways for the referral of survivors of gender-based violence.

During 2019, the Ministry, in partnership with UNICEF and ABAAD, will train 120 staff members working in the Central administration and in the Social development centers in the regions on how to implement these measures.

The Ministry will also work on testing the implementation of these piloting phases, while working with national relevant authorities to adopt a road map to mainstream these procedures, develop relevant packages and tools, and seek to build a national referral system that ensures the provision of comprehensive services to survivors of violence and children and women at risk of violence and exploitation.

It is worth mentioning that the work on these measures was a complement to the achievements made in the framework of the National Technical Action Group on Combating Violence against Women in Lebanon, which was established in 2012 in partnership with ABAAD, which has produced and developed national tools for monitoring cases of violence (The National Curriculum on the Management of Gender-Based Violence, the Standards and Characteristics of the Role of a Social Worker in the Management of Gender-Based Violence, and Medical Tools for the Investigation of Gender-Based Violence).

- Capacity development

In 2018, the Ministry of Social Affairs and UNICEF, in partnership with ABAAD, trained 35 workers in six development services centers: Byblos, Jibchit, Borj Rahhal, Baalbek, Zahlé, and Al Laboueh. Training includes the following topics:

- Guidelines and safe referral of cases of gender-based violence
- Principles for protection against sexual exploitation
- Training on how to facilitate information-giving sessions
- Basic Life Skills Program - Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

After the training, the staff of the centers became able to safely refer survivors of violence to individual referral services and organized awareness-raising workshops on gender-based violence in the centers of affairs listed below.

- Provide services to protect against gender-based violence

Over the past five years, the Ministry of Social Affairs has worked in partnership with UNICEF and a number of local and international associations (KAFA Enough Violence and Exploitation Organization - ABAAD - Akkar Network for Development – The Association for combatting violence Against Women - Terre des Hommes Association) to establish 12 safe spaces for women and girls in a number of development services centers - in accordance with the following schedule:

Name of the center - the safe zone	Governorate	Association
Bint Jbeil	South	ABAAD
Sarepta	South	Terre des Hommes Association -Lausanne
Qoubbeh	North	ABAAD
Miniyeh	North	The Association for combatting violence Against Women
Halba	Akkar	Akkar Network for Development
Hisah	Akkar	Akkar Network for Development
Bebnine	Akkar	ABAAD
Al Mazra'a	Beirut	KAFA
Borj El Brajneeh	Beirut	KAFA
Sin el Fil	Beirut	KAFA
Qobb Ilyas	Beqaa	KAFA
Joub Jannine	Beqaa	KAFA

Safe zones in development service centers provide a basket of psycho-social support services that include:

- Prevention: Services to access and mitigate the risks of gender-based violence, including information-giving sessions and psychosocial support.
- Response: Especially the case management and referral of survivors to specialized services such as psychiatric services - clinical care services for women survivors of sexual violence and legal services; in addition to psychosocial support programs.

Safe zones also include nurseries for children, making it easier for mothers to participate in protection programs.

The number of women and girls who sought safe spaces funded by UNICEF in 2018 was about 18,500 women and girls - about 7,733 girls between the ages of 12 and 18, and the remaining 10742 were over the age of 18.

About 70% of the UNICEF-funded safe zones are available in development service centers. The number of women and girls who have access to safe spaces in service centers is about 12,500 women and girls.

In addition, according to the monitoring and evaluation tools used to monitor the results of GBV programs in Lebanon, 88% of women who have sought safe spaces funded by UNICEF have been able to build a network of relationships and support, and gain useful information, including knowing where to go to in case of gender-based violence. And 44% feel safer.

During 2019, the Ministry of Social Affairs continues to partner with UNICEF and civil society organizations to provide gender-based violence services in 11 safe spaces - a development services center in Lebanon.

It should be noted that the services are provided through the development services centers to all beneficiaries of different nationalities without discrimination.

The total number of beneficiaries of UNICEF-funded safe spaces in 2018 is 18,528 women and girls.

4446 Lebanese

13671 Syrians

112 Palestinians from Syria

232 Palestinians

67 other nationalities

- Establish a hotline to receive complaints about all forms of violence against women:

On 1/10/2018 Hotline 1745 was allocated in the operations room of the Directorate General of Internal Security Forces to receive complaints of domestic violence.

Memorandum: On 03/07/2018, the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces issued a service note no. 164/204, dated 4/22/2013, and then a general memorandum No. 316/204, p. 4, on the assets of communication and abuse by the concerned elements regarding complaints of domestic violence.

Training sessions: The Institute of Internal Security Forces (ISF) organizes training sessions involving ISF elements on international standards and national laws on women's rights and how to deal with women survivors of violence. To date, 1400 members of the Internal Security Forces have been trained on the law protecting women and other family members from domestic violence and about the role of the judicial authorities in implementing Law 293/2014. The training also includes elements in Operating Rooms 112 on how to receive communications,



respond and aid for women survivors of GBV. Investigators and operating room personnel were trained on how to receive and handle complaints from abused women, human trafficking and sexual abuse.

- Providing safe rooms for receiving women survivors of GBV

The Directorate General of the Judicial Divisions, as well as the Office of Combating Human Trafficking and Protection of Decency, and the Ras Beirut Branch, equipped rooms for the reception of women survivors of GBV, where there are beds for forensic medical examination and glass barriers for separating women and juveniles from the rest of the detainees. All judicial establishments were equipped with computers and programs to document complaints of domestic violence against women, girls and other family members registered in all regions, in accordance to a standard form on domestic violence cases. This information is kept in a consolidated database in the Directorate General of Internal Security Forces.

- Introduced or strengthened strategies to prevent violence against women and girls (e.g. in the education sector, in the media, community mobilization, work with men and boys)
- Adopting an ISF strategy 2018-2022 aimed at "ensuring a safer society"

The Directorate General of Internal Security Forces has adopted a comprehensive strategic plan for the years 2018-2022. This strategy aims to enhance stability, safety and security; partnership with civil society organizations; protect human rights and increase accountability; and build the capacity and effectiveness of professional security forces. The vision of the institution was defined as "Together towards a Safer Society". It also included four strategic objectives aimed at developing the professional competence of elements of the internal security forces while respecting human rights and activating accountability and partnership with society, especially human rights organizations, women, and children.

Among the programs included in the five-year strategic plan are:

- Program to strengthen the capacity to combat crimes against vulnerable groups and crimes based on gender
- Program to build the necessary partnership in all areas, especially participation in the drafting of Law 193/2014 (Protection of women from domestic violence)
- Program to disseminate the rules of respect for human rights at all levels
- Monitoring and evaluation of impact, including evidence generation and data collection, including for specific groups of women and girls

Preparation of studies:

The Office of the Minister of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth is currently preparing a study on the economic cost of gender-based violence in partnership with ESCWA and UNFPA. In this context, the following activities were carried out:

- Holding several meetings with ministries and public institutions to identify the services provided and the availability of data and information, including: Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (Lebanese General Security and Internal Security Forces), Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, and the National Commission for Lebanese Women.
- Several meetings were held with non-governmental organizations working in the field of combating gender-based violence to identify the services provided and the data available as follows: Organization for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Kafa.
- Prepare the fieldwork report based on the above meetings. This report is the preparatory phase of the project.
- Organize national consultations with ministries, public institutions and non-governmental organizations working in the field of gender-based violence to agree on the scope of work, type of violence, methodology and operational plan for project implementation.

**15. What strategies has your country used in the last five years to prevent violence against women and girls?**

- Public awareness raising and changing of attitudes and behaviors

The Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces has launched awareness campaigns on domestic violence and violence against women. The "We Have a Mission" campaign, which was launched on 25/11/2013 and ended on 10/12/2013, where the Directorate General in cooperation with the organization "Kafa" set up favorable barriers in various areas, including the distribution of awareness leaflets.

The 16-day campaign from 25 November to 10 December. During these campaigns, the internal security forces set up awareness barriers in all Lebanese regions, prepared special cards regarding domestic violence, and distributed leaflets containing the duties and responsibilities of the internal security forces. These campaigns focused on building trust between the community and the state institutions, where the Directorate-General established a special program to document cases of domestic violence.

**16. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to prevent and respond to violence against women and girls facilitated by technology (online sexual harassment, online stalking, non-consensual sharing of intimate images)?**

In this context, the Ministry of Social Affairs carried out the national program on the protection of children from abuse and misuse of the Internet. Specifically:

- The preparation and implementation of regional meetings for children in the governorates of Beirut, Mount Lebanon and Bekaa targeted approximately 10,000 children from public

and private schools aged 13-15, in cooperation with the Educational Center for Research and Development, the Internal Security Forces, The Association for the Protection of Juveniles, in conjunction with the establishment of an exhibition for Internet companies and specialized NGOs (Protection Society, Takaful Association, Islamic Relief, Institutions of the Islamic Authority for Care), an exhibition to target children on their safety through the Internet and violent extremism, including attracting them to participate in terrorist acts, and addressed the following topics:

- Follow-up awareness seminars in schools on ensuring children's safety from the dangers of the Internet in order to create a safer environment.
- The production of two short video films for television in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and with the support of the British Council, the first dealing with the protection of girls from sexual exploitation on the Internet and the second deals with the risk of recruiting children through the Internet.

**17. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to address the portrayal of women and girls, discrimination and/or gender bias in the media?**

- n/a

**18. Has your country taken any action in the last five years specifically tailored to address violence against specific groups of women facing multiple forms of discrimination?**

For migrant women domestic workers:

In an effort to protect migrant women working in domestic service and to guarantee their rights and reduce their exploitation, the Ministry of Labor initiated several administrative measures aimed at improving their working conditions:

- Decision No. 168/1 of 24/11/2015 concerning the organization of offices for the recruitment of migrant domestic workers
- Develop the Hotline in the Ministry of Labor to provide the required service to receive communications and complaints from workers and refer them to the relevant departments for follow up (Hotline No. 1741)
- Negotiations with some foreign labor-exporting countries to sign memorandums of understanding and labor contracts to exchange employment with them (some countries include: Ethiopia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Bangladesh)
- Establishment of the National Steering Committee on Improving the Status of Migrant Domestic Workers: This committee includes representatives from the International Labor Organization, the Lebanese National Commission for Lebanese Women, civil society organizations and foreign labor recruitment offices.

- Completion of the guide on the rights and duties of women migrant workers

Complaints are processed in this regard and followed up with the embassies. Upon proving the violation, the employer is placed on the black list and is prevented from recruiting any worker through his name, in addition to filing a lawsuit before the relevant court to collect the rights of the workers under his obligation. The worker is also informed of her right to file a criminal suit - if she wishes - before the relevant court, where the judge will take the appropriate decision, up to and including the imprisonment of the employer.

Awareness is also given to all groups on rights through inspection visits and follow-up of complaints at the Ministry of Labor and in the labor tribunal.

## **Participation, accountability and gender-responsive institutions**

### **19. What actions and measures has your country taken in the last five years to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making?**

- Reformed constitution, laws and regulations that promote women's participation in politics, especially at decision-making level, including electoral system reform, adoption of temporary special measures, such as quotas, reserved seats, benchmarks and targets

In 2018, the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs previously recommended to the Council of Ministers requesting the activation of a recommendation dating back to 2010 for the adoption of a quota for women in appointments in leadership positions in public institutions.

It should be noted that the proportion of newly appointed women has reached 27% in the diplomatic corps, 30% in the Electoral Supervisory Authority, 23% in the security services, 17% in the Economic and Social Council, and 11 women out of 22 in the Ministry of Culture (The General Organization of Museums, the National Institute of Music and the National Library).

- Implemented capacity building, skills development and other measures

In 2018, during the preparatory period for the parliamentary elections, the Ministry of Social Affairs carried out an awareness campaign aimed at enhancing the effective participation of women in the parliamentary elections and enhancing their access to parliament by gaining the support of public opinion. The campaign emphasized the importance of cooperation between men and women to achieve better representation of women in Parliament. The campaign included distributing posters, pamphlets and brochures to communities through more than 200 social services centers distributed across all Lebanese regions and non-governmental organizations contracted with the Ministry of Social Affairs.

National parties on women's issues and civil society organizations have worked to implement programs to encourage women to participate in the elections by candidature and vote. These programs/initiatives include the establishment of an alliance of women activists and candidates to run for parliamentary elections, meetings aimed at introducing the new election law in Beirut and the regions, and launching media and advertising campaigns to encourage women to

participate in politics by voting, running and participating. These programs, as well as an intensive televised media campaign, covered all Lebanese regions.

The (former) Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs under the project "Enhancing the Participation of Women in Political Life" (December 2017 to May 2018) implemented, with technical and financial support and in partnership with the United Nations Women's Fund and the United Nations Development Program Lebanon and the European Union, the following activities:

- A conference entitled "Enhancing the Role of Political Parties in Promoting the Representation of Women in the 2018 Parliamentary Elections" was held on 17 January 2018. The conference included a round-table discussion in which about 150 representatives of political parties, ministries, deputies, embassies and civil society organizations participated, and a road map was launched to promote women's participation in political life.
- Organizing a training workshop on "Campaign Management and Skills Development" for women belonging to political parties and independent candidates. 19 female political party members were trained from February 5 to February 7, 2018, and 24 independent candidates were trained from 8 February to 10 February 2018.
- A meeting was held with various media outlets on "The Role of Media in Promoting Women in the Parliamentary Elections" in the presence of 27 people from all media outlets on 16 February 2018.
- At the level of local elections, national entities and some civil society organizations carried out workshops to support women and encourage them to run for elections. The National Commission for Lebanese Women also carried out training courses for women on the impact of municipal council elections aimed at developing the capacities of elected women and female employees, and empowering local actors in terms of local administration and project management.

#### Studies:

In terms of research, the National Commission for Lebanese Women conducted a study on the political participation of women in 2016 under the title "Advocacy for the adoption of the quota of women in the electoral law". This study aimed to activate the advocacy efforts to adopt the quota mechanism in the electoral law. The study resulted in recommendations for joint action between national entities, civil society organizations and political parties in order to push for quotas. Among these recommendations: the establishment of an alliance of representatives on national entities and civil society organizations to unify the quota demands, and develop an information plan and build a network of media professionals.

#### Accessing data:

Establishment of an electronic database in cooperation with "Sader Group": Due to the importance of disseminating the legal culture among citizens, ensuring women's access to information (the Official Gazette, laws and regulations, amendments, jurisprudence, studies and research), and in order to bridge the existing gap between women and men at all levels, the National Commission for Lebanese Women, in cooperation with the Sader Group(a company specializing in publishing legal documents) created an electronic portal that provides citizens, citizens, researchers and researchers with access to all international treaties, national laws and jurisprudence on women's issues ([www.nclw.org.lb](http://www.nclw.org.lb)).

- Approval of the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities to request the addition of gender identification (female / male) to applications for candidacy for membership of local and legislative councils

In 2018, at the request of the National Commission for Lebanese Women, the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities approved the request to add sex (female / male) to applications to run for elections at the local and national levels in order to avoid confusion between names that could be given to men and women and to facilitate the monitoring process, conducted after the end of each electoral process, on women's political participation.

**20. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase women's access to expression and participation in decision-making in the media, including through information and communication technologies (ICT)?**

- n/a

**21. Do you track the proportion of the national budget that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

No

**22. As a donor country, does your country track the proportion of official development assistance (ODA) that is invested in the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women (gender-responsive budgeting)?**

It does not

**23. Does your country have a valid national strategy or action plan for gender equality?**

Yes

Please see the paragraph on strategies

**24. Does your country have an action plan and timeline for implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (if a State party), or of the recommendations of the Universal Periodic**

**Review or other United Nations human rights mechanisms that address gender inequality/discrimination against women?**

On 28/6/2018, the Government of Lebanon established the National Committee for the Preparation of Reports and Follow-up of the Recommendations issued by the international entities for the protection of human rights, which included several ministries and public administrations (Decree 3568, Official Gazette No. 29 dated 28/6/2018). It is worth noting that the committee is newly formed and is still in the process of institutionalization. The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is currently being prepared, and to this end, a timetable has been set for this preparation process and appropriate consultations with official departments, the Parliament and civil society organizations have been undertaken.

**25. Is there a national human rights institution in your country?**

Yes

The National Human Rights Commission, which includes the Committee on Torture (see paragraph 1) is still in the process of being established.

National Commission for Lebanese Women (see Section III)

**Peaceful and inclusive societies**

**26. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to build and sustain peace, promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and implement the women, peace and security agenda?**

In terms of the participation of women in the security forces, the army leadership has attached importance to the involvement of women in the military establishment. In recent years, there has been an increase in female recruitment in the institution in a remarkable manner and on the same conditions compared with males.

Lebanese women are recruited into the army according to the plan set by the army command and according to the allocations allocated to the Ministry of National Defense.

On 2/12/2009, the army leadership established the Office of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, which, in 2015, became a Directorate for the expansion of its functions and to treat human rights issues with the utmost importance, where all military personnel are trained in these laws.

Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution 1325: Please refer to the paragraph regarding Resolution 1325

National counter-terrorism strategy: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants is currently working, with the support of the European Union, to develop a draft national strategy to combat terrorism. This strategy is still in the making.

National Strategy for the Prevention of Violent Extremism: (please refer to the above paragraph)

Syrian Crisis Response Plan (please refer to paragraph above)

**27. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to increase the leadership, representation and participation of women in conflict prevention, resolution, peacebuilding, humanitarian action and crisis response, at decision-making levels in situations of armed and other conflicts, and in fragile or crisis settings?**

Lebanon Crisis Response Plan:

In 2017, Lebanon's Crisis Response Plan was launched in 2017-2020. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan has more than 104 partner agencies to provide assistance to 2.8 million vulnerable people living in Lebanon. It aims to provide immediate protection and assistance to 1.9 million people - including Syrian refugees, Lebanese citizens in need and Palestinian refugees.

It also aims to provide basic services to 2.2 million people and invest in infrastructure, economy and local public institutions.

Please also refer to the paragraph regarding Resolution 1325.

**28. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to enhance judicial and non-judicial accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and violations of the human rights of women and girls in situations of armed and other conflicts or humanitarian action and crisis response?**

In 2014, an Army Commission was formed to study how to combat human trafficking. The officers (who work in border groups and a number of forensic officers working in the field of preliminary investigations) participated in specialized courses on human trafficking and protection of victims so as to be able to distinguish the crime of human trafficking from similar crimes and to identify victims of trafficking at an early stage.

Please also refer to earlier paragraph on combating human trafficking crimes by the Directorate General of the Internal Security Forces.

**29. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to eliminate discrimination against and violations of the rights of the girl child?**

- n/a

**Environmental conservation, protection and rehabilitation**



**30. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives and concerns into environmental policies?**

- Increased women's access to and control of land, water, energy and other natural resources

Over the past five years, the Ministry of Agriculture, through irrigation projects, has been trying to involve women in these projects by at least 20%. In this case, it is the woman who owns the project or helps her husband or her family to work in their respective lands. This integration process contributes to capacity-building, improving agricultural skills and their ability to conserve natural resources.

**31. What actions has your country taken in the last five years to integrate gender perspectives into policies and programmes for disaster risk reduction, climate resilience and mitigation?**

- n/a

### **Section III: National Institutions and Processes**

#### **32. What is your country's current national machinery for gender equality and the empowerment of women? Please name it and describe its location within Government.**

Lebanon has 4 national mechanisms to achieve the goal of equality between women and men:

##### 1. National Commission for Lebanese Women

The National Commission for Lebanese Women is an official institution affiliated to the Presidency of the Council of Ministers established in 1998 under Law No. 720 o. The members of the Commission are appointed by a presidential decree for a period of three years. Female deputies and ministers shall during their term be considered ex-officio members of NCLW and shall have a consultative status. The members of the Commission shall be active within the framework of permanent or temporary ad hoc committees following the progress of the projects or programs implemented.

The law sets forth three tasks: consultative, coordinating, and executive.

- At the consultative level, the National Commission plays an advisory role with the Government and other public authorities and institutions in all matters relating to the situation of women and gender issues. These advisory tasks range from expressing opinions and observations to proposing strategies and plans to the government in order to achieve the desired objectives.
- It also carries out coordination functions among public institutions, non-governmental organizations and government agencies concerned with gender issues.
- At the executive level, the National Commission is concerned with the development of national plans and strategies to support the advancement of women's situation, in cooperation with various public institutions and the relevant civil society organizations. It is also concerned with the implementation of projects on women's development issues, the conduct of studies and research on women's issues, and the organization of workshops, conferences and activities, both domestic and international.

##### 2. Office of the Minister of State for the Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth:

In 2016, the Government of Lebanon established the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs headed by a Minister participating in Cabinet meetings. The Office was established by decree and has not been assigned tasks or allocated a budget in the general budget.

In 2019, after the formation of the current government headed by Mr. Saad Hariri, the Office of the Minister of State for Economic Empowerment for Women and Youth was established instead of the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs, empowering women and enhancing their potential and capacity development.

##### 3. Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children

The Parliamentary Committee was formed at the end of 2000 and consists of twelve deputies, headed by a female member of parliament since 2015 to date. This Committee operates

according to the mechanism governing the legislative work of the parliamentary committees. Said committee receives suggestions and draft laws regarding women (and children), which should be studied in the light of the proposals of the relevant civil and governmental bodies and the search for their compatibility with international conventions. It then submits its suggestions to the Committee of Joint Commissions for consideration (if the project is referred to more than one) before being submitted to the plenary of the Council for final consideration. The Committee has worked on more than one law and has cooperated and continues to work with the National Commission for Lebanese Women in this regard.

4. Women's Department, an affiliate of the Department of Family Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs

It is a unit in the Department of Family Affairs of the Ministry. Its functions include the formulation and approval of programs aimed at responding to women's needs, enhancing their capacities and proposing budgets to monitor the necessary funds for implementation, in partnership with other ministries and non-governmental organizations. The department also supervises governmental and civil activities related to women and follows up and coordinates the Lebanese government's relationship with international, Arab and national institutions. It also supports the efforts of the women's movement, contributes to its activities and unites its efforts. It also ensures the implementation and follow-up of the agreements on women concluded by the Lebanese State with the United Nations.

**33. Is the head of the national machinery a member of the institutional process for SDG implementation (e.g. inter-ministerial coordinating office, commission or committees)?**

Yes

In 2017, the Government of Lebanon established the National Committee for the Follow-up to the Implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, chaired by the Prime Minister. In addition to the general directors of ministries and public institutions, representatives of the Lebanese National Commission for Lebanese Women and the Ministry of State for Women's Affairs (recently replaced by the Ministry of State for Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth), representatives of civil society organizations and private sector institutions, in order to ensure the commitment of all concerned parties from the public and private sectors to implement these objectives.

One of the objectives of the committee was to contribute to the drafting of Lebanon's first voluntary national review on the Sustainable Development Goals, published by the United Nations at the end of June 2018. Sub-committees were formed according to the axes of these Goals. Three awareness-raising workshops on the Sustainable Development Goals were organized, with representatives from all the above mentioned bodies. A website has been developed for all these entities to exchange experiences on how these Goals are being implemented. In addition, a legislative institutional mechanism, or a parliamentary commission, has been established to monitor the progress of this process of application. This parliamentary commission has begun to survey legislation and laws related to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Lebanon has achieved at least seven goals, particularly in the areas of health, primary education and gender equality in the education sector. Lebanon has been lagging behind in achieving the other Sustainable Development Goals because of the Syrian crisis, which has contributed to the increasing challenges in achieving these goals. The increase in the number of people living in extreme poverty (already high before the Syrian exodus) was observed as the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon was exacerbated by the lack of financial resources of the State, which prevented it from addressing the increasing demand for public and social services. However, this did not prevent the government from introducing the national program to combat poverty and from providing various types of social services to date such as health and education services and various subsidies such as bread and electricity, reducing the benefits on housing loans, etc. In the health sector, Lebanon and expanded its coverage. The Government of Lebanon introduced the Health Strategy for 2025, and the Ministry of Health has incorporated Sustainable Development Goals into its plans and strategies.

**34. Are there formal mechanisms in place for different stakeholders to participate in the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

There is no special mechanism for the implementation and monitoring of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. However, the National Commission for Lebanese Women has been working on the preparation of periodic reports to monitor progress in the situation of women. In order to prepare this report, the National Authority cooperates with all relevant ministries and departments to provide them with the necessary information on their achievements as well as the challenges to achieving the goal of equality between men and women.

For the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a national committee to oversee the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals was set up in 2017, headed by the Lebanese Prime Ministers

It should be noted that Lebanon initiated the preparation of the Voluntary National Review (VNR) in 2018 on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. (Please refer to the above paragraph)

**a. Which of the following stakeholders participate formally in national coordination mechanisms established to contribute to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?**

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
Civil Society Organizations ✓	Civil Society Organizations ✓
Women’s rights organizations ✓	Women’s rights organizations ✓
Academia and think tanks ✓	United Nations ✓
Parliaments / parliamentary committees ✓	Other actors, please specify....
United Nations ✓	

Other actors, please specify....

**b. Do you have mechanisms in place to ensure that women and girls from marginalized groups can participate and that their concerns are reflected in these processes?**

Yes

In general, national women machineries adopt a participatory approach in developing any national policy aiming to achieve equality between women and men as well as in the preparation of international reports and reviews. In this context, the National Commission cooperates with all civil society organizations from active associations at the national and local level, and associations that work with marginalized groups such as refugees, displaced persons, migrant workers and political parties. This methodology includes consultative meetings before and after the preparation of reports, in order to follow up the implementation of this policy and to implement the recommendations of international committees and mechanisms.

**c. Please describe how stakeholders have contributed to the preparation of the present national report.**

The preparation of this report coincided with the preparation of two reports: a report on the progress made in the implementation of the CEDAW and the UPR. In this context, the National Commission has prepared a consolidated questionnaire comprising questions for each official department on their contribution to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the CEDAW and the UPR recommendations. All the themes were discussed during consultation meetings on related topics.

The importance of the participatory methodology adopted by the National Commission in the preparation of international reports is that it gives all those who participated in it a sense of ownership of these national reports, which in the end are national reports issued by the Lebanese government and allow them to exchange experiences in this field. It also contributes to raising awareness among official administrations on the manner and scope of the application of international conventions and reviews and how to coordinate between departments regarding information exchange and cooperation for the implementation of international commitments.

This methodology also contributes to strengthening the capacities of public administrations in institutionalizing the process of preserving and using information in the periodic reports requested by the Lebanese government. This methodology also allows the National Commission to obtain all information documented in official reports issued by official departments and civil society organizations.

**35. Is gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls included as a key priority in the national plan/strategy for SDG implementation?**

There is no national plan / strategy to implement sustainable development goals.