This draft report is a basic monitoring exercise of economic and social rights situation in Lebanon in light of the UPR recommendations received in the first cycle revision. It is a joint work of several civil society groups active in Lebanon and engaged in the UPR process. The report is based on various sources including: articles, reports, news items, Ministries’ websites, UN websites, civil society organizations’ websites and work.

1 Please see ANNEX for the full list of organizations contributed to this report.
Introduction

The revision of human rights records of Lebanon through the Universal Periodic Review mechanism concluded by the Human Rights Council plenary session on March 17th 2011, during which the Council adopted the outcome of the first review. During this first revision, Lebanon received 123 recommendations in total, accepted 83 of them and rejected the remaining 40.²

The four-year ahead, up until the second revision that is set to be held in 2015 during the 23rd UPR revision, is critical for promotion and protection of human rights overall, as well as the implementation and progress on the recommendation received and voluntary commitments made by Lebanon during this first review. Follow-up of this process, close monitoring and evaluation of the steps taken and related advocacy by civil society groups is crucial and necessary. Indeed, potential added value of civil society’s engagement with the UPR process extends beyond the development and preparation of a report on human rights conditions. Such engagement can contribute to enhancing the role of civil society organizations in monitoring and evaluating rights conditions, related public policy making, and levels of governmental accountability.

In this regard, this report stands as a midterm evaluation of the recommendations received and voluntary commitments made by Lebanon during the first review. It focuses specifically on economic and social rights, following the joint submission of civil society groups active in Lebanon on economic and social rights.

The report shedding light on the process aims at contributing to civil society groups’ collaborative work on monitoring and advocacy on economic and social rights in Lebanon. Moreover, it is a clear stance of the groups involved with regard to their concrete commitment to use UPR as a tool to promote economic and social rights. The information and data compiled for this report will set the background for the second cycle submission as well. The report follows an initial issue-based categorization³ of recommendations received on economic and social rights (i.e. general, women, children, poverty, employment...etc) and the response given. Then the progress on implementation of each recommendation will be elaborated with references to actions taken and related policy recommendations from civil society groups for further progress.

² During the Working Group session, Lebanon received 123 recommendations in total and accepted 69 of them, stating that 28 are already implemented. 40 recommendations were rejected and for 3 of them Lebanon noted that they were (a) not within the scope of the UPR; (b) submitted by the occupying power of Lebanese territories; (c) infringing on the sovereignty of Lebanon. For the remaining 14 recommendations, Lebanon replied to consider until the 16th Human Rights Council session and during the plenary announced that all recommendations were accepted, with the exception of a part of one recommendation.

³ In case of multiple issues covered in one recommendation, the report details the recommendation under one issue only, in order to eliminate the duplication and repetition of data and information.
Drastic changes in Lebanon since the first cycle revision: The massive inflow of Syrian refugees

Since the first cycle revision of Lebanon in 2010, and right after the conflict that erupted in Syria in March 2011, one of the most critical changes and challenges that Lebanon is facing is the Syrian refugee crisis. Today around 752,120 persons of concern according to UNHCR but with around 1,000,000 people according to government estimates, the huge refugee inflow brings humanitarian responsibilities—including providing shelter, food, water, sanitation, healthcare, schooling and other services—for Lebanon, but equally creates important challenges deriving from political, security and economic risks and stress on social cohesion.

Nevertheless Lebanon was late to recognize and respond to the crisis, as it was only December 2012 that a comprehensive plan was adopted that also became the “official recognition of the urgency of the crisis” through a needs assessment and monetary requirements. However, in addition to lack of prior and initial well-coordinated approach to deal with the distribution of refugees across the country that created problems in allocation of resources and control of the situation, further political instability came with the resignation of the Government in March 2013. Despite these, Lebanon continues to follow an open-border strategy for the Syrian refugees.

It is important to note that together with the lack of an effective scheme to monitor and deal with the crisis problem, and the political stability which is core to support this scheme with a clear political will, Lebanon’s own economic and social struggles are making the overall economic and social situation in the country problematic and tense both for the Lebanese population and Syrian refugees. A rapid assessment of the situation reveals that “major burden on Lebanese communities stems from facts related to Lebanese hosting areas [of Syrian refugees] being the poorest in Lebanon”. Indeed, the snapshot of a four million country hosting an additional one million is reflecting the challenge. This include among other aspects; problems in education sector with public schools doubling students while public schools were already insufficient in quality and quantity terms, increasing cheap Syrian labor in the country in various sectors leading further poverty and inequality in the enjoyment of the right to work

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5 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/docs_autres_institutions/commission_europeenne/comitologie/ros/2013/D026539-01/COM-AC_DR%282013%29D026539-01_EN.pdf
among the population, health facilities unresponsive to the needs of increasing population especially in areas where refugees are settled, together with lacking sewage and water systems. Apart from these, further to note is the situation of Lebanese who have returned from living and working in Syria (around 20,000 and 30,000 people). They face further vulnerabilities as not being Syrian refugees and do not qualifying for any aid.  

Given this context, during the first cycle revision, whereas Lebanon received several general recommendations on socio-economic situation development and specific recommendations on education, health, labor rights the new and significant component of Lebanon, namely Syrian refugees’ situation should be well-assessed in their implementation.

- In this regard, civil society organizations call Lebanese government to:
  - Adopt and implement a clear strategy towards the Syrian refugees and prioritize it both for the socio-economic well-being of Lebanese population and refugees and in order to ensure social cohesion in the country
  - Allocate further resources to areas where refugees are settled to enhance the local infrastructure including health and education facilities
  - Ensure the optimal use of scarce resources, coordinating and effectively implementing the humanitarian response, engaging in a close partnership with all relevant stakeholders including UN agencies, civil society organizations and international non-governmental organizations

Given the deteriorating situation of the Syrian refugees, the call of the civil society organizations is directed as well to donors and UN agencies and international non-governmental organizations active in Lebanon. This call include:

- Ensure that the pledges of aid made by donors are provided to Lebanon and relevant UN agencies to address the refugee crisis.
- Extend humanitarian assistance provided by UN agencies and international humanitarian organizations to the families in Lebanon hosting Syrian refugees as well as particularly to areas where Syrian refugees are hosted. In this regard, pay particular attention to the situation of Palestinian families in camps who host Palestinians from Syria and ensure that the humanitarian assistance and aid allocated to Syrian refugee crisis respond to the needs and necessities of the camps
- In addition, a particular attention should be given to the Palestinian Syrian refugees coming to Lebanon, the number of them expected to reach 80,000 by the end of the year according to UNRWA. The

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7 http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/05/28/averting-crisis-syrian-refugees-in-lebanon/g6wd
exerting of stricter scrutiny at the border creates discrimination especially for the Palestinian Syrians.

Moreover, the groups raise the following highlights and recommendations on specific issues of concern:

**With regard to the right to education:** Almost %40 of the Syrian refugees is of school age. Whereas the Lebanese government set the goal of having 60 per cent of all refugee children in school, it is noted by UNHCR that in the current academic year, only 30,000 of the estimated 120,000 school-age refugee children go to state schools. Another 10,000 are estimated to receive some form of private education9.

In this context civil society organizations call Lebanese government to:
- Ensure that the Lebanese education strategy prioritizes the Syrian refugee children’s enrollment to school and full enjoyment of the right to education together with strengthening the local infrastructure of public schools with a deliberate understanding that education is vital to maintain some form of normalcy and structure in the children's everyday lives and to help prevent and recover from trauma.

**With regard to the right to work:** Given that registered Syrian refugees can live and work in Lebanon, the Syrian refugees’ integration in the Lebanese economic cycle was rather easy if found working opportunities. Yet, the same time this leads to further challenges through competition for labor among Lebanese and Syrians, especially that the ESCWA expects the number of Syrians refugees to reach 2.3 million in 201410, which means half the population of Lebanon. This also leads to an increase in unemployment and urban poverty where Syrian refugees are hosted. There as also cases, where unregistered refugees’ labor rights are not respected and protected, lacking regular payment and decent working conditions.

In this context civil society organizations call Lebanese government to:
- Adopt a comprehensive employment and wage strategy in Lebanon that ensures the integration of the Syrian refugees in the economic cycle, particularly through regularizing the status of those refugees who entered illegally through enhancing registration process and issuing work permits
- Raise awareness among host communities and Syrian refugees about their right to work and legal framework aiming at preventing discriminative acts

**With regard to right to health:** About half of the Syrian refugees in Lebanon are not getting the medical care they need11. Indeed, several eradicated diseases are once again witnessed including cases of polio, tuberculosis, and scabies due

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http://www.unhcr.org/519e166e9.html
11 http://healthinequalities.thehealthwell.info/node/401832?source=relatedblock&content=journal&medium=web_link&campaign=healthwell
to lack of access to healthcare and further pressure on the already insufficient health facilities where Syrian refugees are hosted. Furthermore, living conditions in overcrowded areas and with unsanitary conditions are causing further diseases and infections. The problems are especially serious for unregistered refugees. A survey undertaken by MSF in Bekaa valley reveals that 56% of those registered had access to free hospital care as opposed to 20% of those not registered, and 47% of registered refugee children were vaccinated, compared to 27% of those not registered.

In this context civil society organizations call Lebanese government to:

- Strengthen the health facilities and ensure easy access to healthcare (primary and secondary) particularly in urban areas where Syrian refugees are hosted
- Ensure coordination with Lebanese and International humanitarian organizations in provision of humanitarian aid, including food, shelter, medicine in order to enhance the overall living conditions for the refugees
- Aside from strengthening primary and secondary health care for refugees, prioritize support for psychosocial support services for the traumatized refugees, particularly of children, women and elderly.

**With regard to situation of women and children:** Around three-quarters of the Syrian refugees who have fled to Lebanon are women and children. Vulnerable additional risks factors including child labor and sexual exploitation are particularly important for these groups. The cases of “survival sex” becoming alerting to secure money and food for the families. With regard to children's situation, as noted by UNHCR, another important challenge derives for child refugees who do not receive schooling, becoming vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups to fight in Syria.

In this context civil society organizations call Lebanese government to:

- Prioritize the situation of women and children in overall response to refugee crisis in Lebanon, particularly ensuring their access to food, shelter, healthcare and education services.
- In accordance with Lebanon's commitment to international resolutions, in particular UN Security Council Resolution 1325 ensure the protection of women and particularly the minors from gender-based violence.

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14 [http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Feb-08/205550-registration-system-slowing-syrian-refugee-access-to-health-care-msf.ashx#ixzz2cQAX1D2b](http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2013/Feb-08/205550-registration-system-slowing-syrian-refugee-access-to-health-care-msf.ashx#ixzz2cQAX1D2b)
The implementation of UPR recommendations accepted

a) Human Rights instruments for the promotion and protection of economic and social rights

- Consider becoming party to human right instruments that it has not ratified yet

Since 2010, Lebanon did not accede to any international human rights instruments.

- Consider ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

There has been no progress on the accepted recommendation to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The treaty, being signed in 2007 still is waiting the ratification to enter into force. This is as well despite to ministerial statements, which included specific reference rights of persons with disabilities and calling for the ratification of the Convention.

Civil society groups’ recommendations with regard to Human Rights instruments for the promotion and protection of economic and social rights are:

- In order to ensure the promotion and protection of human rights in Lebanon in accordance with international human rights standards, ratify the international human rights treaties including: Optional Protocol to International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, First Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- Finalize the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (signed in 2007) and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, which was signed earlier in 2002.
- In adherence to customary international law not to return refugees to a place where their lives or freedom would be threatened, became part to 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol
- Ensure the effective implementation of the international treaties through adoption of domestic laws and related reforms remains critical for Lebanon
- Support the law-making process with an effective monitoring of the implementation of these laws for ensuring that human rights are protected and promoted

b) Establishment of the National Human Rights Institution
• Strengthen the institutional framework in the human rights area, including through the establishment of a national human rights institution in accordance with the Paris Principles

Although it is included in the National Action Plan for Human Rights,(launched 10 December 2012-see below-not finalized yet) Lebanon has not yet finalized the establishment of an independent national human rights institution in Lebanon. The draft law for the establishment of the NHRI in accordance with the Paris Principles was submitted to the Parliament in 2012, yet remained under study at the Law Commission and not adopted. It is important to note that several civil society groups participated in drafting process of this law.

The abovementioned bill includes as well the establishment a National Preventive Mechanism (NPM); the establishment of a permanent Committee for the Prevention of Torture, which will function as the Lebanese NPM.17 With regard to criminalization of torture, another draft law to criminalize torture in accordance with the CAT has been submitted to the parliament in December 2012, but not finalized.

Moreover, the government pledged to establish a national commission to investigate the fate of those Lebanese and other nationals who “disappeared” during and after the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war. In October 2012, Justice Minister put forward a draft decree to the cabinet to establish the commission, which in turn formed a ministerial committee to examine the draft.18 By February 2013, the final copy was submitted to the government by the Ministerial Committee but the Lebanese government resigned before examining it. Moreover, the State Council issued a decision regarding the decree, to the effect that for any such national commission to be established, it would require a parliamentary ratification, and not a ministerial decision. On the other hand, civil society organizations developed, through a two-year consultative process, a draft law that would set the legal and institutional framework for addressing in a most comprehensive manner this issue, while meeting international standards and best practices. This draft bill was presented to the members of the ministerial commission and Minister of Justice, as well as to Members of Parliament. Both government and parliament members have failed to initiate any serious discussion around the draft bill.

In January 2012, a Code of Conduct for Lebanon’s Internal Security Forces was adopted. The Code of Conduct sets out professional and ethical standards of behavior to guarantee respect for human rights and protection of public freedoms in accordance with Lebanon’s Constitution and its human rights obligations. It brings a roadmap of what is allowed and what is prohibited in line

with international human rights treaties and conventions signed and ratified by Lebanon.\textsuperscript{19}

**Civil society groups’ recommendations are:**

- Ensure the immediate adoption of the National Human Rights Action Plan with a view to put respect and promotion of human rights as a top priority in the political agenda and enhance the commitment to human rights promotion by enabling regular monitoring of the implementation of the action plan, with participatory approach and including the concerns and recommendations of the civil society organizations
- Fulfill the commitment to establish an independent, national human rights institution with a clear mandate in accordance with Paris Principles and enabling a mechanism to receive complaints and give citizens the right to an effective remedy.
- Given that initiatives are taken with regard to establishing a National Preventive Mechanism and establishing a national commission to investigate the disappeared people in Lebanon, take concrete steps at legislative level to operationalize working of such mechanisms.
- Adopt the law on criminalization of torture
- Ratify the International Convention on Enforced Disappearances

**c) National Human Rights Action Plan**

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<td>• Successfully implement the important initiative of the National Human Rights Action Plan</td>
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On the occasion of Human Rights Day, on December 10\textsuperscript{th} 2012 Lebanese Parliament has launched the draft National Action Plan for Human Rights, which envisages the establishment of an independent national human rights committee. However, this launch has not been followed by endorsement by the Parliament, thus waiting to be effective. Indeed, it is noted that the process of discussion, endorsement and dealing with legal technicalities by the relevant ministries will take until 2019\textsuperscript{20}. Thus the Action Plan remains as an initiative without further concrete steps taken.

**d) General on Economic and Social Rights**

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<td>• Further pursue its efforts to ensure the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights</td>
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\textsuperscript{19} http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/ACodeofConducttohelpprotectHRLebanon.aspx
The violations of economic and social rights in Lebanon can be mainly related to the failure of economic and social policies adopted by successive governments in addressing national developmental challenges. The latter includes chronic unemployment, poverty, weakening productive sectors, increasing inequalities, geographic disparities, and lack of social protection. The rentier economic approaches, weakly managed privatization, and overall economic liberalization policies favored by governments, coupled with weak regulatory infrastructure and capacities, have limited the ability of the state to respond to the needs and necessities of various citizens. Moreover, the long history of political instability and violence, combined with the frequent wars with Israel, has lead to further limitations on the capacities to progressively fulfill the obligations in the field of economic and social rights. The effects of such instability have lead to the focus on narrow security agendas and rehabilitation related to immediate needs instead of building comprehensive human security approaches that integrate long-term development policies. Furthermore, the progressive achievement of social and economic rights has been hindered by a political system entrenched by confessionalism and encouraging nepotism and abuse of power. Within this context, the government’s approach to development focused on economic growth indicators (on individual sectors as tourism, agriculture, industry, etc) or merely on basic services remains counter-productive and not responsive to challenges faced with regard to the full enjoyment of basic economic and social rights.

On March 2012, the Presidency of the Council of Ministers has prepared a 7-point action plan for social and economic reform that includes: (1) managing public debt and financial reform; (2) revitalizing the private sector; (3) enhancing infrastructure; (4) human development; (5) regional and rural development; (6) institutional and administrative reform; and (7) other support factors. Whereas the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, including civil society and private sector is a must for ensuring the reform process’ success, it is also important to note that the reform process should contribute to reshaping economic and financial systems and adopting new policies for social development while consolidating human rights and ensuring equity.

In this regard, civil society organizations note that:

- Lebanon should aim to approach development by looking at all sectors in a holistic and comprehensive manner, by understanding societal aspirations, and by strengthening national identity.
- Instead of focusing exclusively on free trade agreements (bilateral, regional and multilateral) including WTO accession (in progress since 1998), the government should articulate a national strategy for protecting and developing productive sectors including agriculture, industry and

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22 Some of these requests were made earlier in the joint submission prepared by the groups and some are raised by CSOs through the National Report Rio+20
services
- Embrace the principles of fair trade and support the global movement towards the fair exchange of goods and services.
- Improve economic and social planning for local development together with efficient and effective mechanisms to deal with corruption and impunity
- Given the violations on equity principle in enjoyment of rights and the gap between the urban and rural areas deriving from high tendency of centralization, ensure proper and effective de-centralization through substitutive and financial authorities delegated to local authorities elected democratically.

e) Adequate standard of living

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<td>• Continue applying the strategies and plans for the socio-economic development of the country</td>
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Poverty remains a key challenge in Lebanon, with 28.5% with 8% of those living in extreme poverty (UNDP report).\(^{23}\) Whereas 83% of the Lebanese population believes that poverty elimination is government’s responsibility, 48% states that the programs are not effective at all. 84% notes that such programs should serve the poor in general but not be focused on specific groups like widows, orphans.\(^{24}\) Yet the approach of government remains limited, based on a narrow definition of poverty, limiting the poor to a particular class, and seeking to help them directly through in-kind donations and financial services without addressing the root causes of poverty.

*Given this context, below are some progress undertaken by the government towards consolidating social programs and measures in fighting poverty and social exclusion:*

On October 2011, Lebanon launched the **national program to support the poorest families of the national**. By February 2013, 65,000 families applied to the program and 45,000 families were approved in the first phase. Additional 18,500 families began receiving benefits by 2013.\(^{25}\) The program aims to support these families through providing free hospitalization, preliminary health care, medicine, exemption of poorest families from tuition fees in government schools in all phases and ensuring school books. The program includes different initiatives, including beneficiaries’ receipt of a discount of 20,000 Lebanese pounds ($13) on their electricity bill or elderly beneficiaries to


receive a food basket every three months for instance. By 2013 the new initiative the card Hala started that enables beneficiaries to obtain health coverage in 30 government and 44 private hospitals, and covers the cost of drugs for chronic diseases. It also provides free registration and textbooks for students in public schools.

The program is beneficial especially with regard to mapping out the poverty and establishing a database of information on poverty yet is limited and necessitates a new approach that focuses on developing a long term comprehensive social plan addressing the root causes of this poverty remains critical for Lebanon. As stated in the National Report to UN Sustainable Development Conference Rio+20, civil society in Lebanon notes that “poverty cannot be addressed by targeting only specific segments of the society and improving the income of the poorest families will not stop the intergenerational transfer of poverty. Instead, poverty can best be addressed by reducing socio-economic burdens through the provision of affordable and high-quality basic services including clean water, energy, public transportation and housing as well as health and education including free schooling”.26 In this regard, it is important to restate that ensuring public services with regard to education, health care equally to all Lebanese citizens is a state obligation, that should rather be based on comprehensive national plans for long-term, rather than short-term project based funds allocations.

On October 2011, Social Affairs Minister announced a new measure to help Lebanese with disabilities secure housing loans. Around 84,000 holders of disability cards in the country are eligible under the new measure, which aims to ensure equality between all Lebanese citizens.27 However civil society organizations highlight the lack of effective implementation of the law for ensuring progress and equality for the rights of persons with disabilities.28

The 2012 Lebanese budget includes the VAT rise from 10% to 12%, and taxes on interest from bank deposits to 8% from 5%.29 However the studies reveal that “tax rate increases will have major negative impacts on the welfare of the middle class and households living just above the poverty line. Overall poverty in Lebanon, currently evaluated at almost 30% of the population, might increase to 35 and even 50% as the VAT rate is moved to 12 and 15%”30. This increase in VAT while corresponding to the commitments made under the problematic Paris III reform agenda, brings in further negative impacts on the living conditions of the poor population in Lebanon.

Civil society organizations recommend:

- Adopt a new and comprehensive approach to poverty reduction that addresses the root causes of poverty
- Build, sustain and develop a database on poverty in Lebanon with disaggregated data
- Revise the commitments made under Paris III through a national dialogue process with a rights-based policy approach and accordingly revise the taxation policy in Lebanon in order to avoid the negative impacts and ensure the adoption of a fair taxation policy based on progressive direct taxation that contributes to the redistribution of wealth in Lebanon.

**f) Education**

**Recommendation(s) accepted**

- Finalize the national action plan on education for all and improve the quality of education

The public spending on education (% GDP) is in continuous decrease in Lebanon, from 2% in 2008 to 1.6% in 2011, which is less than half what other Arab countries spend on education. This adds to the disparities in the quality of the public system and private education and creates further inequalities in the enjoyment of the right to education. In this regard, whereas the National Action Plan for Education aims to tackle the shortcomings in the quality of the education system, the low quality of education in public schools leads to de facto discrimination against students who are not able to afford private schoolings.

Furthermore, a national strategy for early childhood is still lacking and intentions to raise the age for free compulsory education to 15 have yet to be translated into action.

**Civil society groups in Lebanon recommend:**

- Enhance the quality of public education, developing a new unified curriculum, establishing and implementing quality-oriented strategies especially for public schools in rural areas, and adapting the school environment to the basic needs of children and people with disabilities.
- Focus reform efforts on increasing and maintaining enrolment rates, reducing and reinserting dropouts, giving incentive premiums for teachers to serve in poor areas, establishing continuing education programs for teachers, and expanding maintenance of the existing educational infrastructure.
- Ensure a fair employment process that grant the teachers their rights in particular good salaries, and that ensure continuity in their work. Ensure that any National Education strategy aims at modernizing the education system, adopts a gender based approach.

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32 National Report to Rio+20
Continue efforts to counter the brain drain to foreign countries and strengthen standards of professional education related to the main economic activities in the country.

Whereas to counter brain drain necessitates the quality of jobs in the market to match with the education attainment of youth, Lebanon continues to struggle with brain drain to foreign countries. This derives from the quality of the jobs created aside from their quantity. Moreover the challenge to create decent jobs is core to the problem of brain drain. From different educational backgrounds, Lebanese youth “prefer to leave Lebanon either temporarily or permanently to work abroad, leading to a decline in the country’s human capital and welfare.”

For instance, nearly 40% of all doctors who graduated from Lebanese medical schools over the past 25 years currently practice in the United States.

Civil society organizations recommend Lebanese government to:

- Tackle brain drain in relation to mismatch of education and job sector
- Continue its policies and programmes to improve the efficiency and quality of basic social services such as health and education for its citizens
- Improve the quality of public education in order to preserve the excellent standards which have prevailed in Lebanon for decades at the different levels of education

Despite the appreciation in the recommendation to the “excellent standards of the public education” civil society groups contributed to this report believe that the quality of public education needs to be rather ensured through developing a new unified curriculum, introducing a dropout prevention program, establishing and implementing quality-oriented strategies especially for public schools in rural areas, and adapting the school environment to the basic needs of children and people with disabilities, while working towards banning double shifts in schools.

With regard to higher education, the public university remains limited, indeed private universities making a major contribution to the sector, with their share of enrolment rising from 40% in 2000-01 to 57% in 2008-09. However this does not ensure accessibility and affordability of all citizens to this education creating further violations for the right of education for majority. On the other hand, the Lebanese University, with limited government funding and conflicting political and sectarian interests hindering its development, has been unable to accommodate increased student demand. This necessitates launching an effective and time-bound reform program of the Lebanese University system that addresses issues of access, curriculum, tenure-ship, governance, management, and

administration.

In order to enhance the quality assurance in higher education, the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies has completed the formulation of a **draft law for the establishment of a Board of Quality Assurance in Higher Education**. The draft law was prepared at the request of the Minister of Education and Higher Education who then referred it for the approval of the Council of Ministers. The draft law is viewed as a basis for a new phase in the development of higher education in Lebanon, restoring its high status and ensuring its quality, particularly that it feeds the needs of the labor market.

A coordinating committee composed of members of the Lebanese Association for Educational Studies has worked to prepare the draft law and organized for this purpose two seminars that included representatives from universities and institutes of higher education in Lebanon and a number of heads of quality assurance agencies in some Arab and foreign countries.

- Continue efforts in connection with the integration of disabled children in formal education as far as possible, in accordance with an inclusive educational approach

The **integration of disabled children** in formal education still lacks progress in the absence of a national political strategy for the integration of disabled children in education. Thus, despite the guarantee of law 220/2000 section VII, dedicated to disabled persons right to education in all educational institutions, several obstacles remain in ensuring access to education, including:

- the absence of statistics, data and studies relating to persons with disabilities
- lack of availability of appropriate public and private schools with relevant infrastructure and environment persons with disabilities including visually, mentally or hearing impaired
- lack of adaptations of the curriculum in line with the needs of learners visually impaired, hearing impaired, or mentally, or associated resources.
- scarcity of personnel in education sector and public sector and appropriate training for them to deal with the needs of persons with disabilities.
- The continuation of challenges as buffer institutions continue to receive substantial financial allocations from the government, yet contribute to perpetuate the exclusion policy.

According to UNESCO 2010 Background Paper for Education for All in Lebanon “majority of children with disabilities are in special care institutions, and private schools have a policy of automatically eliminating students with disabilities.”

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39 Quoted as Arab Resource Collective (2007: 14)
With regard to institutional structure, the education committee at the National council on Disability remains not operational thus half the people who obtain a disability card are still uneducated.\(^40\)

The ministry of Education had however issued the “National Plan to integrate people with disabilities” aiming at equipping 5 schools to adapt to students with disabilities’ needs, and to train teachers. The decision number 27/m/2012 of the Ministry of Education established a special unit in the ministry to ensure the integration of students with disabilities in public schools. The rights of people with disabilities have been also incorporated in the Action Plan of the ministry aiming at improving the educational sector\(^41\).

**Civil society organizations recommend Lebanese government to:**

- Adopt an inclusive educational strategy and integrate students with special needs into the mainstream educational system
- Establish a plan to equip all public and private school buildings with the necessary infrastructure to ensure people with disabilities can access the buildings and ensure that the budget of the Ministry of Education takes into consideration this equipment according to the 2012 National budget.
- Accommodate the educational curriculums with the needs of people with an intellectual disability and train the educational and administrative bodies on the rights and needs of students with disabilities and ensure the implementation of the "National Plan to integrate people with disabilities"\(^42\)

- Intensify efforts to spread a culture of human rights through educational curricula and awareness-raising campaigns

Lead by the Integrated Working Group for Human Rights of the United Nations Country Team and in collaboration with the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, teach-ins were **scheduled to be launched on the UN-day in October 2011** and will take place in various high-schools and universities throughout Lebanon. The teach-ins aimed to contribute to the long-term prevention of human rights abuses and violent conflict, the promotion of equality and sustainable development and enhancement of participation in decision-making process. These teach-ins focus on nine key issues on which Lebanon has accepted recommendations during its Universal Periodic Review:

- Torture,
- Enforced disappearance
- Human trafficking
- Migrant domestic workers
- Palestinian and other refugees, non-citizens and minorities
- Women


\(^{41}\) The Disability Monitor report 2012, Lebanese Physical Handicapped union-LPHU

\(^{42}\) Recommendations taken from the Disability Monitor report 2012, Lebanese Physical Handicapped union-LPHU [www.lphu.org](http://www.lphu.org)
- Children
- Persons with disabilities\(^3\).

The ‘teach-ins’ or classes held in 30 schools and four universities, reached over 2,500 students.

**g) Health**

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<td>- Continue its policies and programmes to improve the efficiency and quality of basic social services such as health and education for its citizens</td>
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| - Continue applying the programs and measures aimed at guaranteeing health and education of quality for its citizens |

Whereas Lebanon received general recommendations during its UPR review in 2010 and presents a success story at the Ministry of Health official website with extracts from the WHO report 2010 on Lebanon’s reforms and on improving health system efficiency, increasing coverage and lowering out-of-pocket spending, the health system in Lebanon and the quality of health services remain challenging for the majority of the population. The health care system, mostly based on private sector does not ensure accessibility and affordability for all citizens equally. Indeed the recent incident of a death of uninsured child reflected the core problem; lack of universal health coverage in Lebanon.\(^4\)

Given this context, below are some progress undertaken by the government towards improving the efficiency and quality of health sector:

On August 17, 2011, the Lebanese Parliament passed the new tobacco control law number 174. This law officially makes Lebanon a 100% smoke-free country; it also comprehensively bans tobacco product advertising, promotion and sponsorship; and it establishes health warnings covering 40% of both fronts of the pack.\(^5\)

**Number of awareness campaigns were** launched by the Ministry of Health since the UPR revision, including\(^6\)

- Asthma awareness campaign, Hepatitis B & C Campaign (aiming at tackling these deceases by providing a 50% discount on tests.),
- Heart failure campaign,
- Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign
- Cervical Cancer Awareness Campaign
- Hand Hygiene Awareness Campaign
- National anti-drugs Campaign

**Civil society groups' recommendations on the enjoyment of the right to**

\(^3\) http://www.undp.org.lb/unv/Awareness_HumanRights.cfm


\(^5\) http://www.tobaccocontrol.gov.lb/Pages/default.aspx

\(^6\) www.moph.gov.lb
Health include:

- Reform the health system in order to establish a health policy that prioritizes protection of the citizen in need of health services, preserves the right to adequate information in the health sector, and promotes a stable and long-lasting partnership between the public and private health sectors.
- Strengthen the regulatory role of the state in the health sector, define the role of the different public and private stakeholders, monitor their performance thus rooting out corruption and waste, and enhance the effectiveness of the administrations.
- Ensure the availability, accessibility, and quality of health services provided by public hospitals and primary health care centers in rural areas.
- Develop a unified, sustainable, and equitable plan to ensure universal social security for all Lebanese, and to unify the social security funds.
- Ensure the revival of the National Office for medicines that imports medicines for the social security funds with good prices, in particular its role as a competitor for the private sector.
- Grant the appropriate attention to women’s special health needs and include the issues of reproductive and sexual health in the plans related to improving the health sector.

h) Labor Rights

During the 2010 review, the right to work issue in Lebanon was covered mainly regarding child labor, Palestinian refugees and the domestic workers. Yet, the lack of comprehensive employment policy in Lebanon and support to productive sector that generates employment is a core challenge for the full realization of the right. Indeed, as World Bank report states, Lebanon needs to generate around 20,000 additional jobs per year over the next decade, transform its economy into a productive model and reform social protection.\(^47\)

The economic policies implemented in Lebanon although generated growth did not contribute necessarily job creation indicating the problematic of the sectors supported in the rentier-economy model. Between 1997 and 2009, the gross domestic product expanded at an average rate of 3.7 percent per year, yet employment grew by only 1.1 percent,” the report said.\(^48\)

According to December 2011 CAS labor statistics\(^49\), unemployment rates are high among highly skilled persons in Lebanon, 9% for those persons who have already obtained their university degrees and 8% for persons with secondary level of education. With the exception of people without any formal educational attainment, the unemployment rate was higher for women than men regardless of the level of education achieved. At just over 14%, the unemployment rate was particularly high for women with secondary level education.

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Furthermore, it should be noted that the people with disabilities right to work which is guaranteed by the law 2000/220, paragraph 68 is not respected. People with disabilities can see their candidatures refused because of their disability, let it be in the public or private sector. Cases were also observed about transferring the job applications of people with disabilities to work sections that do not correspond to their qualifications only because of their disability. Paragraph 73 of the law 2000/220 stipulated that 3% of jobs in the public sector should be given to disabled people, but this has not been implemented. 

- Reinforce its efforts to regulate labor relations in a framework that safeguards dignity and rights and is consistent with international standards, in particular with regard to ancillary or domestic workers

As far as labor standards are concerned, Lebanon launched procedures in January 2012 to ratify International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 87 on the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize. Yet it remains not ratified.

- Develop appropriate legal frameworks for the enjoyment of the right to work and to just and favorable conditions of work to all migrant workers especially domestic workers

- Expedite their consultation on the bill to grant domestic workers annual leave and provide cooperation with social workers to monitor their working conditions

- Regulate labor relations with special reference to ancillary or domestic workers

- Continue efforts to address the problems in connection with domestic workers with a view to increasing protections for this vulnerable group

- Establish mechanisms for monitoring the employment of domestic workers

Lebanon has made no progress in improving the situation of domestic workers, in particular migrant domestic workers. Several structural problems remain, these are: a unified employment contract that does guarantee or grant minimum rights for migrant domestic workers; a lack of legal redress and protection for migrant domestic workers; illegal recruitment practices and lack of monitoring of private agencies that replaced the National Institute for employment which is legally the only institute which can recruit migrant domestic workers; restrictive immigration regulations and practices (i.e., the sponsorship system) that tie a worker to a single employer for the duration of her stay in Lebanon), and which increase the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers with a view to increasing protections for this vulnerable group.

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50 The Disability Monitor report, Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU)
51 Lebanon ENP Report
52 The majority of domestic workers are women
domestic workers to abuse and even trafficking. To address migrant domestic workers’ vulnerabilities, the Lebanese government should look into reforming or replacing the sponsorship system and extending coverage of the Lebanese labor law to domestic workers. Indeed, following a visit to Lebanon in October 2011, the UN special rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery urged the government to enact laws to protect the estimated 200,000 **migrant domestic workers** who face exploitation and abuse by employers, including excessive work hours, non-payment of wages, confinement in the workplace, and in some cases, physical and sexual abuse.\(^5^3\)

Certain developments on the situation of migrant/domestic workers include the following:

June 1, 2010 Minister of Labor announced **a hotline at the ministry to receive complaints migrant domestic workers**. However as of 7 July 2010, no single call, due to lack of information and dissemination of information among the MDWs.\(^5^4\)

As part of OHCHR and ILO’s ongoing efforts to protect and promote the rights of domestic workers in Lebanon, a voluntary Code of Conduct providing guidance to recruiting agencies on promoting and protecting the rights of migrant domestic workers was launched with the Syndicate of the Owners of Recruitment Agencies (SORAL) in Lebanon by June 2013. Under the Code, recruitment agencies that agree to sign the Code are obligated to protect workers placed by the agency from all forms of discrimination, physical and sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation. The agencies are duty-bound to clarify worker and employment rights, and expected duties at the very beginning of the contract relationship. They introduce workers and employers to their rights and obligations and communicate in a language that is understood by the worker. SORAL will review internally agencies that violate the Code. Agencies that violate the code of conduct by facilitating work placements leading to forced labor and exploitation for instance, will be blacklisted. Some of the principles upheld in the Code of Conduct include, among others, transparency in business operations; the provision of full information to the worker about conditions of employment in Lebanon; the verification of the worker’s qualification and no placement of underage workers.\(^5^5\)

Yet civil society groups note that without concrete implementation mechanism and relevant self-accountability and disciplinary actions, the code of conduct will not be effective and thus call the Lebanese government to:

- **Adopt and effectively implement protective and regulatory framework for domestic workers, including introducing regulations for greater oversight of recruitment agencies, in contribution to the Code of Conduct that serves for enhancing the transparency of the**


\(^{5^4}\) [HRW Without Protection Report, September 2010]

\(^{5^5}\) [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/LebanonCodeOfConduct.aspx]
placement process of migrant domestic workers

- Revive the role of the National Institute for employment and allocate a budget to the National Institute for Employment in order to prepare and orient disabled people in the labor market
- Abolish the sponsorship ‘kafala’ system with regards to migrant domestic workers and replace it with an employment based visa system to (a) operationalize supervision of the Ministry of Labor on domestic workers’ employment processes and working conditions, as well as on the practice of employment agencies and (b) investigate cases of abuse and provide legal protection for domestic workers.
- Respect the international labor standards at work especially regarding Conventions 87 and 111, and ratify the UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and the ILO Convention on Domestic Work, 189
- Given the clear violation of the Right to Association and the Right to Decent Work as Article 7 of the Lebanese Labor Law does not cover domestic workers, farmers and agricultural workers, and workers in government and municipal administrations, as well as daily workers, amend the Labor Law to include these groups and ensure equal rights’ protection.
- Establish a clear and permanent mechanism to facilitate the participation of disabled people in the tests of the Civil Service Council in order to ensure that 3% of jobs in the public sector are given to people with disabilities.
- Implement the paragraph 74 of the law 2000/200 stating that employers should employ a certain percentage of disabled people according to the general numbers of employees. In order to do that ensure that:
  - Employers receive fines if they don’t respect the law
  - The National Social Security fund stops issuing clearances to employers disobeying the law
  - Encourage employers to employ people with disabilities by reducing the income taxes in case they employ more disabled people according to paragraph 75 of the law
- Ensure the Ministry of Labor follows the submitted complaints from people with disabilities about violations of their rights by employers 56.
- Grant domestic workers the right to have syndicates
- Enforce the judicial institutions responsible of treating labor disputes especially the ‘Labor arbitration councils’ by increasing their numbers in the governorates and districts, and improving their work mechanism taking into consideration that some cases take years to be treated.

i) Economic and social rights of the Palestinians

This section of the report discusses the human rights situation of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and the Lebanese state ’s compliance with its obligations in the light of the first UPR revision. Given that Lebanon rejected vast majority of recommendations related to human rights conditions of Palestinians, the revision outcome was rather limited for protection and promotion of

56 The Disability Monitor report, Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union (LPHU)
Palestinians rights in Lebanon. It should be clearly noted that the recommendations were rejected, despite being recommendations applicable for Lebanon under its obligations to international law of human rights including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on civil and political rights.

Since the revision, an important development that occurred in Lebanon, namely the launch of National Plan for Human Rights is crucial with regard to the human rights situation of Palestinians. The launch of the National Plan for Human Rights in Lebanon (2012-2017) on 10 December / December 2012 was completed in response to the Vienna Declaration in 1993, which recommended that each State consider the formulation of a national action plan showing the steps that improve the state under which the promotion of human rights. The National Plan with a dedicated section on the rights of Palestinian refugees states that "the protection of Palestinian refugees is a shared responsibility between the host countries and the international community organizations concerned".

In this regard the National Plan bear Lebanon as the primary responsible for providing protection to the Palestinian refugees residing on its territory. This requires the harmonization of the Lebanese legislation with international standards and the establishment of a special legal status of Palestinian refugees resident and registered in Lebanon.

**Recommendation(s) accepted**

- Continue to call on the international community and donor countries to finance projects such as the initiative launched by the Government in 2006 to improve the lives of the Palestinian refugees and the living conditions in camps, and similar initiatives to ensure a life in dignity for Palestinian refugees until the time of their return to their Palestinian homeland, in cooperation with the international community

- That amendments to the Labor Law (law no 129) and the Social Security Law (128) granting Palestinian refugees the right to work be made operational as soon as possible

With regard to the right to work of Palestine refugees, a law implementing amendments to the Labor Law was passed (August 2010), in order to grant certain rights to Palestine refugees registered and residing in Lebanon, including the issuance, free of charge, of work permits and the provision of end of service benefits through the Lebanese Social Security Fund. Taking into consideration that 56% of the Palestinian refugees of working age are jobless (among them, 83.3% are female and 16.6% male) 57, this is a positive achievement but relevant measures are lacking to immediately ensure the genuine implementation of this legal amendment and in relation “to improve the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian refugees” as stated in Action Plan. Besides, this legislation does not address the fact that Palestinian refugees remain barred from

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57 UNRWA 2011, Employment right to work www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011100225615.pdf
practicing in over 30 syndicated professions. Nevertheless it is important to note that, on 2012, a positive step was taken by the nurses syndicate by accepting that Palestinian nurses—that have a work permit—can be members in the syndicate.

With regard to social security, it is important to note that while the Palestinians should pay 23.5% for the Social Security fund, they can only benefit from 8%. This whereas creates violations for their enjoyment of the right, is a reason that many employers continue not to accept to register Palestinians in the social security fund.

- Ensure that education covers all areas of the country, including the living areas of refugees, bearing in mind that the mandate of the UNRWA covers the educational needs of Palestinian refugees

According to UNRWA, 2011 Report Better schools, Brighter Future, In Lebanon, Palestinian refugee children and young people have restricted access to the public school system. Furthermore, the cost of private education in Lebanon is among the highest in the region and most families do not have the financial resources to enroll their child in one of these institutions. 8% of the Palestine refugee population of school age (7-15 years) were not enrolled in school in 2010. 10% of the population aged over 15 years have never attended school at all. Only half of young people of secondary school age (16-18 years) are enrolled in schools or Vocational Training Centers. Two-thirds of Palestinians above the age of 15 do not have the Brevet. Only 5% of Palestinians hold a university degree.

- Take further measures to improve the working possibilities and working conditions of the Palestinian refugees

According to the Socio Economic Survey of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon published by the American University of Beirut (December 2010), there remain several challenges with regard to ensuring economic and social rights to Palestinian refugees, including, as noted in the report: “As for higher education, only 13% of refugees older than 18 have the Baccalaureate or higher, compared to 17% for the Lebanese population.”

“An extreme poverty threshold of US$ 2.17 allows purchasing enough food to satisfy the daily basic food needs of an adult Palestine refugee. 6.6% of Palestine refugees spend less than the monetary equivalent necessary to cover their basic daily food needs. This amounts to 16,000 individuals. The extreme poverty rate in camps (7.9%) is almost twice of that observed in gatherings (4.2%). The high poverty rate reflects overall low income, as proxied by expenditure, among Palestine Refugees.

58 ibid
59 www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011100225829.pdf
60 www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20111012074253.pdf
61 www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20111012074253.pdf
Given that recommendations including accelerating procedures in Ministry of Labor to achieve the regulations that facilitate the work of Palestinians, and the provision of free education to all children, as well as universal health care, granting the Palestinian refugees the freedom of movement, finding a solution to the problem of legal identity documents for the Palestinian refugees, and the amendment of all discriminatory policies against them were rejected by Lebanon during the first cycle revision, civil society organizations, based on the National Action Plan recommends that second cycle revision should definitely tackle the human rights conditions in Lebanon and call Lebanese government to:

**On Labor rights and social security:**
- Implement Labor Law number 129 by issuing the required decrees.
- Abolish of the condition of reciprocity that preclude Palestinians from exercising liberal professions such as medicine, engineering and law, as well as from joining the Labor Union and liberal profession syndicates etc.
- Ensure the implementation of the social security law number 128 to allow the Palestinian workers to benefit from the National Security fund services according to the principle of paying charges in return of services applied to Lebanese.

**On property rights:**
- Abolish the 2nd paragraph of point 1 from the law number 2001/296 on granting the non-Lebanese, real estate rights, in order to allow Palestinians to have land properties like all other Arabs in Lebanon. Awaiting for the implementation of this measure, stop the arbitrary application of the law 2001/296 that prohibit Palestinians from registering their property bought before the issuing of the law, as well as their inherited property.

**On Education rights**
- Grant more opportunities for Palestinian students to join public schools and organize this process by clear ministerial decisions that grant Palestinian refugees priority on the other foreigners.
- Remove the obstacles in front of Palestinian students joining vocational schools and some of the faculties in the Lebanese University such as medicine and engineering.

**On health rights:**
- Allow the Palestinian refugees to benefit directly from health services provided by public hospitals, and not only through the contracting system with the UNRWA.
- Provide technical support and assistance to the Palestinian health institutions by the Ministry of Health, exempt them from taxes and facilitate their procuraton with medical equipment from outside Lebanon.

**On the right of decent housing:**
- Ease the strict measures on the entrance of building materials to refugees camps, allow the enlargement of the current camps and build new ones in place of the ones destroyed during civil war or the Israeli wars on Lebanon. Linking the infrastructures in the camps to neighboring municipalities to coordinate the provision of important services to the camp (drinking water, garbage etc.)

**On the right of movement and travel:**
• Facilitate the measures on the freedom of movement of Palestinians refugees from and to the camps, especially the camp of Nahr al-bared, and the south camps through limiting the security presence at the entrances and exits of the camps, and the removal of the walls around them.
• Acknowledging the legal personality of the people who don’t have identification papers work to register them at the Direction for Political issues and Refugees.
• On the right to create civil society organizations
• Allow the Palestinians refugees to create their own civil society organizations to enhance the role of Palestinian civil society in order to be an active player and reduce the suffering of the most disadvantaged groups of Palestinian refugees

j) Children’s rights

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<td>• Adopt amendments to the Labor Code regarding the sale and trafficking of children</td>
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<td>• Implement amendments to the Labor Code to strengthen legal measures to combat the sale and trafficking of children</td>
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February 2011, draft Labour Law in relation to child labor brought into:
1. Children below 18 years (15 years in present law) would not be allowed to work in occupations that expose them to danger due to working conditions and they could engage only in non-hazardous work between 15 and 18 years
2. The minister of Labour instead of the Council of ministers would decide by decree which occupations require employees to have more frequent medical checkups
3. Children would not be involved in occupations where they have to carry heavy weights and should only lift weights as decide by the Minister of Labour
4. Labour inspections would include informal economy with the exception of domestic labour and agriculture This clause is very significant as most child laborers in the informal economy work in small-scale industrial establishments (e.g. spray painting cars, as car mechanics, in carpentry) or in agriculture (e.g tobacco cultivation) and in services (e.g restaurants, coffee shops, grocery shops, etc)

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<td>• Accelerate plans for the adoption and implementation of a national strategy for children</td>
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62 Action against child labour in Lebanon, a mapping of policy and normative initiatives, ILO, by Hayyat Osserian
• Strengthen measures to fight child labor within the framework of the national strategy to combat child labor

• Further pursue its efforts to combat child labor

• Intensify efforts to combat child labor

International Labor Organization and Saint Joseph University (USJ) study – during which 1,007 working children in the north and the Bekaa, employed in a variety of industries including carpentry, automobile manufacture and hospitality, were interviewed – showed that **29.5 percent of working children in the north and 36.5 percent in the Bekaa were below 14, the legal minimum working age.** Child labor is inextricably linked to poverty and education, the research showed. In the north, where a person is nine times more likely to be below the poverty line than in the rest of the country, children are also six times more likely to be employed in child labor. More than 33 percent of children in the workforce in the north and nearly 40 percent in the Bekaa could not read and write. This was despite the fact that, in the Bekaa, the majority of illiterate children had attended school for at least two years.63

During 2009-2011 technical cooperation projects undertaken in needy areas in North Lebanon (Especially Tripoli and Akkar) and the Beqaa region (Balalbak and Hermel designing and testing pilot projects addressing child labour issues. *(A holistic approach, including family economic empowerment, is necessary in projects dealing with child labour)*

A specific **strategy for children found working or living in streets** produced by Ministry of Social Affairs in 2011. Beginning 2011, the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA) launched the **National Child Helpline,** a service that enables any child in Lebanon to seek assistance against any case of abuse or violence. In early 2012, MOSA established a **committee of social workers.** This committee will provide guidance to street children and help them plan their future.64

**A national strategy and Action Plan to combat the worst form of Child Labor in Lebanon (2013-2016)** is being developed by the **National Committee for combating Child Labor** headed by the Ministry of Labor and supported by ILO. The strategy/action plan will be shared with Child Protection in Emergencies Working Group (CPIEWG) members when finalized (June/July 2013) and taken into consideration when developing the CPIEWG.65

**Civil society groups recommend Lebanon to:**

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64 taken from the Lebanon Stocktaking Report

65 http://www.google.com.tr/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&ved=0CDgQFjAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdata.unhcr.org%2Fsyr%2Fdownload.php%3Fid%3D2321&ei=2agGUsgxMiVTatA91DADA&usg=AFQjCNHP8g4x7e9AQ0ejTMISXAwtrRq0Gyw&sig2=vER_7g2QT1kZe6XECZofmQ&bvm=bv.50500085,d.Yms
Consider child labor as a social problem and in relation to poverty, drop-out rates, lack of education, poor legislative measures for prevention and adopt a comprehensive strategy to combat child labor

Grant girls the necessary attention especially regarding early marriage as it is considered the main violation of a girl’s rights.

**k) Women’s rights**

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<td>- Consider the creation of additional national mechanisms to promote and protect human rights of vulnerable groups especially women, children, and people with disabilities</td>
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The National Plan of Action on Human rights prepared by the Parliament is important, especially that its approach to Women’s rights is advanced, however, it is still not enough. First of all, the plan recommended eliminating all the discriminatory provisions from the laws but without specifying it particularly, those of the Penal Code, the labor, social protection and personal status laws. This is related to the fact that there is an opposition to substantial reforms affecting women’s rights, and to the fact that there are a lot of problematic issues on which there is no clear official position. Second, the plan didn’t mention the importance of reforming the Trade Code towards establishing equality in the domain of retail trade. The plan recommended the adoption of positive discriminatory measures like the Quota for women, but it was also important to specify the number of 30% of women in the lists and results. In this regard civil society organizations recommend the finalization of National Plan of Action taking into consideration the remarks mentioned below and the adoption of concrete mechanisms to help translating the Plan into strategies and policies.

- Develop a comprehensive policy at the national level, consistent with the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, with the view to achieving gender equality and to combat gender violence

The government adopted in 2010, the draft law on the protection of women from family violence as presented by the National Coalition for Legalizing the Protection of Women from Family Violence, and transferred it to the Parliament in 2011. However, the government included an article (article 26) that gives priority to the personal status tribunals if there is any contradiction between the provisions of this law and those of the tribunals. This article weakens the law because the personal status tribunals in Lebanon are confessional: there is 18 confessions and 15 personal status laws. In late June 2011, both Dar al-Fatwa, the country’s highest Sunni Muslim authority, and the Higher Shi’a Islamic Council, said that they oppose the draft bill.

On Monday July 22, 2013, the parliamentary joint committees in Lebanon approved the law to protect women from family violence, but under a new title:

"The Bill for the Protection of Women and Family Members against Domestic Violence"\(^{67}\).

The National Coalition for Legalizing the Protection of Women from Family Violence welcomed this step, but expressed their concerns\(^{68}\) about the amendments that targeted the spirit, the content, and the object of the law. The law is awaiting adoption by the General Assembly and accordingly the National Coalition recommends the adoption of the law by the Parliament after:

- **Providing protection measures specifically to women**
- **Eliminating the link between the child custody age according to the Personal Status laws and the protection of children, because the right to protection is absolute and should not vary according to the different religious laws.**
- **Criminalizing of the act of marital rape in itself, and not only its harmful consequences.**\(^{69}\)

| • Strengthen its efforts to eliminate discrimination against women in law and practice |

Lebanon has made limited progress on these recommendations. In 2011, the Parliament passed reforms nullifying article 562 of the Penal Code, which allowed for reduced sentences for so-called honor crimes. However, the Lebanese government’s reluctance to lift the reservations on CEDAW hinders real progress towards elimination of discrimination against women. In particular, the Lebanese state refuses to eliminate discrimination in the personal status laws (i.e. ensure women and men have equal rights in terms of marriage, divorce and child custody), grant women the right to pass on their nationality to their husbands and children. In addition, there are several discriminatory statuses in the Penal Code, especially relating to adultery, rape, prostitution and abortion.

**Civil Society Organizations recommend to:**

- **Eliminate all discriminatory measures against women that exist in the Constitution, laws and legislation in accordance with International Human rights Law, and develop laws that protect women from gender-based violence**

| • Continue efforts for the advancement of women and their participation in public life, and fight violence against women |

\(^{67}\) According to the version that was approved in the committees, the powers of the religious versus the criminal courts are clearly separated in article 22 (previously article 26), a victory for the campaign, after months of advocacy. However, and despite the re-introduction of the crime of marital rape in the latest version of the law, it is still not explicitly criminalized as an assault by itself; rather it is the harm that accompanies it that is penalized. Moreover, and as indicated by the new version, minors do not profit from the protection order, unless they are still under the age of custody as set by the different personal status laws laws. This article will make women more reluctant to report abuse because they may not be able to protect their children when they file for a protection order.

\(^{68}\) http://www.kafa.org.lb/FOAPDF/FAO-PDF-10-635104472735253782.pdf

\(^{69}\) Based on this, marital rape should be transferred to the section on rape in the Penal Code and not to the section on physical violence and harm.
Establish laws and cultivate processes and institutions to protect women’s rights, foster women’s political participation, and ensure equitable representation of their interests and concerns.

Continue endowing its National Commission for Women Affairs with public policy making and decision making powers.

In successive Council of Ministers’ statements, the Lebanese government has stated its commitment to improving the role of women in the public sphere, including appointing women to leading positions and honoring Lebanon’s international commitments and recommendations (particularly CEDAW). The government also stated its objective of implementing a National Action Plan to combat violence against women, including concluding the Parliamentary discussions on the draft Law to Protect Women from Family Violence and putting forward regulations and policies to combat trafficking for sexual exploitation and forced labor. The government also stated its objective of strengthening the role of the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) and expanding its mandate so that it can propose and implement national policies for the elimination of discrimination against women.

The NCLW launched in May 2012 its 10 year National Strategy for Women in Lebanon (2011-2021) which is a general reference document for the different government agencies and civil society organizations focusing on human rights, in general, and women’s rights in Lebanon. The document contains 12 clauses on enhancing equality in different fields especially education, health, the fight against poverty, economic life, violence against women, citizenship, political participation, and the importance of considering the gender dimension in all fields. The NCLW document still needs to be discussed and approved by the Lebanese government, and it didn’t state the importance of establishing a unified civil code for personal status and not a unified code that “unify all Lebanese”.

Regarding, women’s active participation in political life, the Lebanese government has made no effort to establish a quota to ensure a greater number of female candidates and a higher portion elected to Parliament. The percentage of elected women to the parliament decreased from 8.4 to 3.2%, and the last government didn’t include a single woman.

Civil Society Organizations recommend to:
- Empowering and training women to participate in the decision making process
- Adopt a 30% quota in nominations and results
- Adopt the quota in a modern and fair elections law
- Provide concrete tools to implement the National Strategy, and the necessary political will to do that
- Continue efforts for the empowerment of women in society
- Further pursue its efforts for the empowerment of women
Especially with regard to economic empowerment of women in Lebanon, there are significant challenges remaining as shown by the national statistics. According to CAS latest labor market statistics, around **79% of working women were employees** (monthly paid employees or weekly, hourly or paid according to production) while, for males, only 55% were employees. Conversely, **only 15% of working women were business owners or self-employed compared with 42% of working men.** Moreover, according to CAS statistics, **men are better off in terms of pay from work than women in all sectors.**

**Civil Society Organizations recommend to:**
- Amend the Labor Code to ensure gender equality, and adopt further mechanisms that protect women’s economic empowerment

- Exert further efforts to adopt the draft law submitted to parliament on full equality between women and men in the area of social insurance and tax law, the draft law on the lifting of restrictions on the assets of wives whose spouses are declared bankrupt.

A progress was made by reforming the law number 180 on 29/8/2011, and allowing the working woman to benefit from tax reduction for her husband and children similar to working men. But the law is still discriminating against women, as it gives compensation for the employed father for his kids living with his abandoned or divorced wife if he is paying her an expense to raise the children. The parliament didn’t sign until now the draft law on the lifting of restrictions on the assets of wives whose spouses are declared bankrupt despite the fact that Lebanon accepted this recommendation.

**Civil Society organizations recommend to:**
- Ensure equality between the father and the mother regarding benefiting from tax reduction

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**ANNEX**

**List of NGOs (in alphabetical order)**

*For further information on preparation of this report and contacts on each organization listed below please do not hesitate to contact the Arab NGO Network for Development at annd@annd.org.*
1. AMEL Association
2. Arab NGO Network for Development
3. Association Justice and Mercy - AJEM
4. Center for Refugee Rights / AIDOUN
5. Coalition of Civil Society Organizations in Lebanon for the UPR
6. Committee for the Follow Up on Women's Issues
7. Committee of the Parents of Disappeared Persons in Lebanon
8. Creadel-Liban
10. Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN)
11. Justicia Foundation for Development and Human Rights
12. KAFA (enough) Violence & Exploitation
13. Lebanese Association for Self advocacy
14. Lebanese Center for Human Rights
15. Lebanese Down Syndrome Association
16. Lebanese Foundation for Permanent Civil Peace
17. Lebanese Observatory For The Rights of Workers And Employees
18. Lebanese Physical Handicapped Union
19. Lebanese Trade Union Training Center
20. Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering
21. Mouvement Social
22. NAJDEH Association
23. Norwegian People's Aid - Lebanon
24. Palestinian Disability Forum
25. Parent Association of Deaf Children in Lebanon
26. Union Progressive Women
27. Youth Association of Blind