



Statement

by

H.E. Dr. **Amal Mudallali**

Permanent Representative of **Lebanon**

to the United Nations

at the 2018 session

of the Economic and Social Council

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Madam President,

At the outset, allow me to commend you on the impeccable organization of this year's Forum.

First, Lebanon aligns itself with the statement made by Egypt on behalf of G77 and China. Second, and as reflected in the report of the Inter Agency Task Force, the seven areas of the Addis Ababa action plan are crucial for the implementation of the 2030 agenda. True Global Challenges remain, which include extreme poverty, rising inequality, weakened trade and investment, rising unemployment, volatile capital flows, low commodity prices, conflicts, and the worst wave of forced displacement since World War II. Per capita growth remains negative or insignificant in many countries where the poverty rate is already high.

The most efficient way of addressing such challenges, particularly in developing countries, is through the development of coherent national financing frameworks which would support the implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. These frameworks should be supported by the mobilization of adequate domestic and international public and private resources, capacity building, technology facilitation, and sound debt management.

Madam President,

Seven years into the Syrian conflict, Lebanon remains at the forefront of one of the worst humanitarian crises of our time and has shown exceptional commitment and solidarity to people displaced by the war in Syria. In the three years that preceded the Syrian crisis, our economy grew at an annual rate of 8 percent on average. This growth has collapsed to an annual average of just one percent since then.

As of October 2017, the Government of Lebanon estimated that the country hosts 1.5 million Syrians who have fled the conflict in Syria. Public services are overstretched, with demand exceeding the capacity of institutions and infrastructure to meet needs. The conflict in Syria has significantly impacted Lebanon's social and economic growth, caused deepening poverty and humanitarian needs, rising unemployment. The crisis had cost the Lebanese economy an estimated US\$18.15 billion due to the economic slowdown, loss in fiscal revenues, and additional pressure on public services. The percentage of our additional debts due to the presence of displaced Syrians in our territory reached \$ 6 billion until 2016. For example, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has calculated that supplying displaced people with electricity alone cost us one billion dollars until 2016.

The assistance made possible by donor contributions and implemented by aid partners under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), along with the exceptional hospitality of Lebanese communities, has brought substantial, vitally-needed support across all sectors.

However, despite these achievements, the needs are growing and continue to outstrip resources and renewed support is essential. The prolonged crisis is having an ever-stronger impact on the Lebanese host population and country's institutions and infrastructure. Lebanon requires the international community to step up its efforts, in accordance with the principle of shared responsibility, and to provide support beyond the narrow prism of humanitarian assistance. Longer term development financing, in the form of concessional loans and grants or flexible investment loans, and spearheaded by international and regional development banks, is essential to deal with a crisis of such magnitude and depth.

This financing will be used in upgrading Lebanon's overstretched infrastructure, with priority given to the education, sanitation, electricity and transportation sectors. This will help in meeting not only the needs of refugees, but also those of their host communities which are literally providing a "**global public good**".

In line with the commitments made by the international community at the Cedre and Brussels conferences to support Lebanon, the Lebanese authorities have made the effort to draw clear and long-term perspectives, especially after adopting the 2018 budget. The Lebanese Parliament has just completed the reform of the water code, They did it through an investment plan, the Capital Investment Program (CIP), and a reform program, in which Lebanon strongly seeks to expand investments, partnerships and delivery models that ensure recovery and social stability whilst enabling progress towards longer-term development strategies. Last Summer, Lebanon formed the National Committee for the implementation of SDGs, with representatives from almost all ministries, private and public sector entities.

Madam President,

The United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres said, "The world has the resources to deliver, but they are not allocated where they are needed most. The choices we make now on financing will be pivotal.

I thank you for your attention.