Australia grants AU$30 million to UNICEF to strengthen access to education for vulnerable children in Lebanon over the next three years

Beirut 24 October 2017 - The Government of Australia announced a $30 million (AUD) contribution to UNICEF over the next three years to increase access to quality education in public schools and strengthen the Lebanese education system through its support to Lebanon’s ‘Reaching All Children with Education’ (RACE II) strategy.

The announcement was made during the Australian Governor-General, Sir Peter Cosgrove, and Lady Cosgrove’s visit to a Lebanese public school as part of a regional tour of the Middle East. The visit was hosted by His Excellency the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Mr. Marwan Hamadeh, UNICEF Representative Tanya Chapuisat and members of the press.

The multi-year grant will allow UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, to guarantee access to formal education for vulnerable girls and boys by supporting their enrollment in public schools, while strengthening the long-term capacity of the Lebanese public education system to improve the quality of education services for both Lebanese and refugee children.

During the visit, His Excellency Sir Cosgrove noted the efforts of the government and people of Lebanon in hosting Syrian refugees saying: "I have heard a lot about the support you have been providing to Syrian refugees and what we see here today is the best proof of this support. We are pleased to say that our activities here and what we are doing in Lebanon is a priority for the Australian government and we will continue to work hand in hand with the Lebanese government.” Adding: “We believe that every child has the right to a good education: education transforms lives and puts an end to poverty.”

The Minister of Education and Higher Education Marwan Hamadeh emphasized the importance of education for all children saying: “With the help of UN agencies and donors, Lebanon has been trying to bring a happy ending to what started as a full tragedy. The generosity of the Government of Australia is allowing Lebanon, as a host community, to cope with the crisis and it’s with this continuous support, that we can ensure every child on Lebanese territory has access to education.”

Ms. Tanya Chapuisat, UNICEF’s representative in Lebanon, welcomed the continued commitment of the Government of Australia saying: “it is only through education that we can end inter-generational cycles of poverty and discrimination. UNICEF is very grateful for the generous and timely support from the Australian Government which will allow us to expand the number of opportunities ensuring access to quality education across Lebanon”.

Funding from the Government of Australia, through UNICEF, will also contribute to the provision of awareness-raising and community outreach activities on the importance of schooling and support the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) for Non-Lebanese and Lebanese children as stepping stone to formal education.

The Government of Australia has provided extensive support to UNICEF in Lebanon since 2013.

For further information please contact:

Blanche Baz, Communication Officer UNICEF Lebanon, Tel: +961 1 757 590, email: bbaz@unicef.org

Follow UNICEF Lebanon on Twitter and Facebook and Instagram

For more information about UNICEF and its work for children visit www.unicef.org/Lebanon/
For more information about Canada in Lebanon visit http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/lebanon-liban