This issue puts the spotlight on the three international conferences that took place in Spring 2018 to rally support for Lebanon. In addition, it provides an update on the partnership signed between the UN and the World Bank that aims to further institutionalize and scale up the results of their response in the country and looks at the new plan to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) among UN staff, partners and stakeholders. We provide an overview of funding for Lebanon in the first quarter of 2018, and look at some of the issues faced by youth in Lebanon highlighting a project providing vocational trainings and life skills courses. Finally, this issue tells the story of a young Syrian refugee who built links with Lebanese youth living in the same village through a project funded by the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund.

International Conferences rally support for Lebanon

International communities reaffirm their support for Lebanon’s stability

Following the meeting of the International Support Group for Lebanon (ISG) on 8 December, three international conferences took place in March and April 2018 to rally support for Lebanon: Rome II with a focus on security, CEDRE which focused on economic investments, and Brussels II in support of the refugee response.

Rome II Conference to reinforce Lebanon’s state security institutions

The Rome Conference, sponsored by the ISG and chaired by the UN and Italy, took place in Rome on 15 March. It brought in significant support for the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Internal Security Forces (ISF). 40 countries and organizations including the European Union (EU) and the League of Arab States took part in the event, which was attended by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, EU External Relations Chief Federica Mogherini and Prime Minister Saad Hariri.

The summit was designed to give LAF and ISF a platform to present their 5-year-plans and mobilize relevant support from partner countries. France announced that it will provide a 400 million-euro (US$494.5 million) credit facility and the United Kingdom (UK) pledged $13 million, in order to help the LAF and ISF consolidate their capacity. UK funding comes in addition to its commitment of more than $110 million up to 2019 as part of its long-term partnership with LAF and ISF. EU also announced that it would provide 50 million euros ($61 million) to support Lebanese security until 2020. The U.S. made a statement of support that highlighted the $1.7 billion that has been given to the Army and over $160 million to the Internal Security Forces since 2006. It also announced a new $9 million investment in ISF training and facilities, subject to Congressional approval. The rest of the countries spoke of their willingness to provide aid over the coming period.

CEDRE supports the Lebanese Economy

On 6 April, France hosted in Paris the “Conférence Economique pour le Développement, par les Réformes et avec les Entreprises” (CEDRE). This conference was intended as a ‘social contract’ between Lebanon and its international partners to help develop and strengthen Lebanon’s economy as part of the Lebanese Government’s ‘Capital Investment
Plan’ (CIP), a comprehensive plan for reform and infrastructure investments which was presented during the conference.

At the conference, the Government of Lebanon presented its “Vision for stabilization, growth and employment”, which was welcomed by all participants. This vision is based on four pillars: (1) increasing the level of public and private investment; (2) ensuring economic and financial stability through fiscal adjustment; (3) undertaking essential sectoral reforms and cross-sectoral reforms, including fighting corruption, modernization of the public sector and public finance management; (4) developing a strategy for the reinforcement and diversification of Lebanon’s productive sectors and the realization of its export potential. Moreover, participants emphasised the need to increase investment and expenditure in social sectors, including health and education, to improve resilience.

The Government of Lebanon also presented its ambitious Capital Investment Program (CIP), which is mainly focused on infrastructure development and rehabilitation. The total cost of the 1st phase of the CIP (covering 6 years for preparatory works and implementation) is estimated at US $10.8 billion, of which around 35% could come from private investment. Participants encouraged the private sector to participate in the financing of the CIP, which should be facilitated by the implementation of the recently adopted Public-Private-Partnership Framework.

Taking into account the scope and ambition of this Programme, and the overall positive assessment by the World Bank Group, participants decided to contribute to the 1st phase of the Programme, while, in parallel, supporting the Government’s implementation of reforms and institutional strengthening, which are critical to the Programme’s successful delivery and Lebanon’s macroeconomic stability.

Pledges at the CEDRE Conference exceeded $11 billion dollars, including $860 million in grants and $10.2 billion in loans. This includes $4 billion from the World Bank and 1.1 billion euros ($1.35 billion) from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as bilateral loans.

Brussels II raises $4.4 billion for Syria and host countries for 2018

Finally, the Brussels II Conference on “Supporting the future of Syria and the region” took place on 24-25 April 2018. Co-chaired by the EU and the UN, it brought together over 70 countries, international organizations and civil society.

The main goals of the conference were to reaffirm the support of the international community to the response to the impact of the Syria crisis – with an emphasis on multiyear commitments and support to host communities – endorse international support to a political solution to the Syria conflict, and take stock of the continued challenges and obstacles faced by humanitarian actors in delivering assistance inside Syria.

The conference discussed concrete operational recommendations to ensure an effective, principled and needs-based humanitarian assistance across Syria, with an emphasis on the fields of education, protection, livelihood and health. Civil society and NGOs were very closely and substantially associated to Brussels II and its preparations. More than 200 NGOs met on the second day to offer operational recommendations to the ministerial part of the conference. Lebanon was represented by 25 NGOs and the American University of Beirut.

The conference raised significant amounts of funding for Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan: a total of $4.4 billion in grants was pledged by donors for 2018 and an additional $3.4 billion for 2019 and beyond at the Brussels II Conference, compared to $6 billion pledged at Brussels I in 2017. Several major donors have yet to announce their pledges in the coming weeks, which will bring up the total amount pledged for this year.
The international community pledged US$100 million to UNRWA in the donor summit held in Rome on 15 March. The conference had been looking to secure funding from donors to make up UNRWA’s current US $446 million shortfall. The pledged funding – which makes up less than a quarter of the expected amount - is a concerning sign of the increasing donor fatigue and political disengagement from Palestinian issues.

The United Nations and World Bank strengthen their partnership in Lebanon

Scaling up impact through innovative funding

On 23 March 2018, the United Nations and the World Bank signed a 2018-2020 Partnership Compact for Lebanon that aims to further institutionalize and scale up the results of their response in the country. Through this compact, the two organizations will join resources and expertise to collectively work on reducing poverty and vulnerabilities and support Lebanon’s economic growth and sustainable development. In addition, the UN and the World Bank will align financing instruments to promote efficient financing, strengthen coherence of development assistance, and increase the impact and coherence of aid.

Joint analysis

Under the Compact, the UN and the World Bank will conduct joint risk and needs assessments of both Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese, with the objective of harmonizing data to better inform policies and programmes. The two institutions will also work toward aligning programmatic engagement and increase collaboration in the key priority sectors of water, health, education, economic opportunities and job creation, social safety nets, the environmental impact of the Syria crisis, e-governance and anti-corruption, as well as gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Harmonizing funding

Recognizing the critical need to harmonize funding mechanisms in order to enhance collaboration and leverage donor support, the UN and the World Bank will conduct joint resource mobilization and outreach to partners. The two organizations will focus specifically on engaging with the private sector and identifying opportunities for partnerships and cooperation.

The Compact prioritizes innovative and integrated solutions to address Lebanon’s multiple challenges. It builds on the humanitarian-development nexus and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Goals, and will be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary.
Lebanon aid community endorses PSEA plan

Familiarizing UN staff, partners and stakeholders with PSEA rules and reporting systems

During the first quarter of 2018 the Prevention and Response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) in-country network has actively worked to make strides in the area of PSEA. Key activities have included welcoming to the network new representatives of international NGOs, organizing induction sessions for the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) partners and UN colleagues, presenting and validating the PSEA Action Plan, and planning Focal Group discussions which will take place in the few coming weeks.

The PSEA in-country network, which was established in 2015, is chaired by UNHCR and UNIFIL and supported by OCHA. This network is formed by 20 UN agencies who have identified PSEA focal points. Last year, the membership was extended to representatives from international and national NGOs. For 2018, Concern and Care will represent the international NGOs within the network.

PSEA training sessions

During the month of March, the PSEA in-country network conducted seven training sessions in Beirut for all the organizations working in Lebanon under the LCRP. The purpose of these trainings was to familiarize 105 people from 77 different organizations, including national and international NGOs and UN agencies, with the basics of core PSEA concepts and definitions, prevention and response mechanisms. At the end of the training, all participants were requested to bring back the discussion and knowledge to their organizations and commit with their management to disseminate information on PSEA to their colleagues through internal sensitization sessions and the dissemination of materials.

Action Plan 2018 endorsed

Over the last few weeks and across the UN, several concrete actions have been taken to set out clear guidance and firm commitment from the UN’s senior leadership to make the zero-tolerance approach to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) a reality – including ensuring that all organizations have clear complaint and follow-up mechanisms in place and that key staff are trained in PSEA in each organization.

This will be a busy year for the PSEA in-country network, with the implementation of the PSEA Action Plan. In the coming weeks, a new round of focus group discussions will be held with communities to assess risks related to SEA and raise awareness on reporting channels with women and girls, as well as men and boys across the country.

International Women’s Day celebration

For the occasion of International Women’s Day (IWD), UN Women invited rural and urban women from Akkar, Bekaa, Tyre, Mount Lebanon and Beirut to celebrate their successes. In partnership with the Office of the Minister of State for Women’s Affairs, the event took place at ESA Business School, Auditorium Fattal under the 2018 IWD theme: ‘Rural and urban activists transforming women’s lives’. In the presence of Regional Director of UN Women Arab States Mohammad Naciri, Special Representative of UN Women in Lebanon Begoña Lasagabaster, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Philippe Lazzarinì and Minister of State for Women’s Affairs Jean Ogassabian, videos on women’s programmes were screened and several women presented testimonies emphasizing the role of UN Women training programmes in changing their lives.
**Funding**

**LCRP appeal 9.4 per cent funded in April**

At the end of March 2018, resources available for the LCRP for 2018 amount to US$559.2 million, of which $308.2 million were carried over from 2017. This represents 9.4 per cent of the 2018 appeal. Comparatively, the amount received is similar to that received at the same time last year.

**Source:** Inter-Agency Q1 funding update as of Apr 2018

**LHF launches US$6.5M Standard Allocation**

**Funding mobilization for 2018**

During the donor meeting held on 24 October 2017 to mobilize resources for the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF), Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC) Philippe Lazzarini announced a new fundraising target of US$20 million for the LHF in 2018. As part of this, the RC/HC also encouraged donor partners to increase their support for the LHF through multi-year funding to ensure its continuity and to provide better visibility for the coming years.

Six months after the meeting, OCHA is pleased to report that $13.5 million have been received so far, with an additional $2 million in the pipeline.

In 2018 alone, four donors contributed with a total of $4.5 million: Sweden ($1.89 million), Belgium ($1.85 million), Qatar ($0.5 million) and Iceland ($0.25 million). The contributions grow to $7 million when Ireland’s pledge of $2.47 million is taken into consideration.

**Launch of the first Standard Allocation**

In close coordination with the sector coordinators and the LHF Advisory Board, a Call for Proposal for a Standard Allocation was launched on 19 March. The total Standard Allocation envelope was set at $6.5 million, with a focus on several highly vulnerable population groups: people with specific needs, Gender Based Violence survivors, Palestine refugees from Syria and host communities. For more information on the Standard Allocation strategy, click here.

In total, 54 project proposals were submitted to the OCHA LHF team by the closing date. Proposals were submitted by 51 humanitarian actors including 20 international NGOs, 29 national NGOs, one UN agency and Red Crescent.
The technical review was conducted in April by seven Sector Review Committees with Sectors coordinators, UN and NGO representation. The RC/HC will now select the final projects by mid-May to be able to receive the funds and kick off the implementation phase.

To stay updated the latest LHF updates, follow them on Twitter at @LHF_Lebanon.

Vulnerable youth gain technical and life skills

**Kicking off a career with entrepreneurship skills and a professional kit**

One in six people in Lebanon is aged between 15 and 24 - that's more than one million people, constituting around 29.8 per cent of Lebanon's current population, including an estimated 520,000 vulnerable people. The economic downturn since the start of the Syria crisis has had a disproportionate effect on young people who are entering the workforce. Lebanon’s youth unemployment rates are three to four times higher than the overall unemployment rate, according to the LCRP. Unemployment is particularly high in some of the country’s poorest localities: in some areas, it is nearly double the national average, placing considerable strain on host communities and refugees.

Education is another challenge faced especially by the young Syrian and Palestine refugees in Lebanon. Social, economic and academic barriers have delayed enrolment of children and youth in the public education system. As desperate families are forced to rely on their children to earn money, child labour becomes a major barrier to school enrolment and attendance. In parallel, violence against children and women have increased as well as reliance on harmful practices such as early marriage and engagement in child labour. Early marriage is increasing among refugees: 27 per cent of Syrian girls and 13 per cent of Palestine refugees from Syria aged between 15 and 19 are married or in union.

**Vocational trainings to help youth achieve their dreams**

During a visit to one of Mouvement Social's centers in Burj Hammoud in March, RC/HC Philippe Lazzarini met dozens of young Lebanese and non-Lebanese young people benefiting from the “Supporting Vulnerable Girls and Boys with Learning, Soft and Hard skills and Employability” programme. To address the lack of education and unemployability among vulnerable communities, the programme, funded by Unicef and implemented by Nawaya, DOT and Mouvement Social, aims to increase the access of youth to technical and vocational trainings, build skills and open participation and empowerment opportunities for improved professional and personal readiness. After long exchanges with the youth about their priorities and concerns, Lazzarini commented: “I am impressed by the 35 professions that are being taught at the centre. Empowering youth by assuring their access to education and vocational trainings is key to the UN mission in Lebanon”.

In the centre, participants from different nationalities get along very well, participating together in the 35 certified vocational trainings classes available to them: from photography...
to photoshop, cell phone repair, and sewing. The trainings are geared to equip the youth with the basics they need to start their professional lives. 20-year-old Mohammad, from Syria, has completed the photography, photoshop and cell phone repairing classes, and continues to visit the centre frequently. “I love coming here from time to time as this place has helped me create a future and a career,” he says. “I started repairing mobiles at home and I am looking forward to opening my own little shop; I hope I am able to make this dream come true soon”. At the end of each course, every participant gets a certificate in order to help them access the job market, along with a professional kit containing essential tools to start their professional life.

**Empowering vulnerable youth with entrepreneurship skills**

One entire floor of the Mouvement Social centre is dedicated to the newly launched “Innovation Lab”, which welcomes youth from the vulnerable communities in Burj Hammoud to train them on social entrepreneurship and digital skills. 525 young people are currently taking part in the training. The social entrepreneurship training helps young participants to come up with a business idea and think of ways to make it happen, which allows them to better integrate in the community they are living in. Farah, a 23-year-old woman from Syria, wants to start a business on fixing and ironing women’s clothes. She thinks she will be good at it because she loves fashion and fixes her old clothes to keep up with the news trends. “I am now sure that I can make money out of my hobby”, says Farah. “The Lab has taught me to have an innovative idea and start my business with almost no capital”. The “Innovation Lab” also teaches digital skills to its students in order to promote entrepreneurship among vulnerable youth in the country.

Such programmes help prevent the further rise of social social tensions within stressed communities by strengthening young people’s capacities, addressing their critical need for vocational trainings, and providing mentorship support and career advice. These projects are essential in a country like Lebanon, where youth have a major role in building resilience in their communities forming better inter-communal relations.

**Moussa’s story**

**Lebanese and Syrian refugees work together toward social stability**

Just over a year ago, more than 10,500 Syrian refugees had to leave their temporary camp near the Rayak air base and find new shelters. In what was the largest eviction so far in Lebanon – with a total of 86 informal tented settlements receiving eviction notices - families were forced to seek refuge in the nearby villages. Moussa’s family was among those who packed everything they could and moved to the village of Tamnin.

In the new village, 31-year-old Moussa did not know anyone. He was a stranger even to the Syrian refugee families living there before him. Shortly after the move, the young man found out about an initiative by the Nabad Association for Development, in partnership with the municipality, which aimed to bring together a group of young Syrian and Lebanese to come up with new ideas to benefit the village and both communities. Moussa was excited to attend the first session of the project, which is funded by the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF).
“I was inspired by this idea and was excited to participate”, Moussa said. “The project didn’t mean a lot to me at the beginning, but I wanted to meet the Lebanese community”. The group ended up getting the green light to create a small space with a playground where children can play and parents can socialize. The group also obtained heavy equipment for winter.

“The experience of working in one group with young Lebanese people enriched me and changed a lot of the misconceptions I had,” said Moussa. Being able to greet a Lebanese friend when crossing the road in the village is very important to him. “I am not close friends with the Lebanese people participating in the project, but now at least we both know that none of us wants to hurt or do wrong to the other. We are all joining efforts to benefit the village by opening a community centre”. The project, ‘Enhancing Social Stability Through Youth Empowerment and Dialogue’, provides support to four municipalities that were affected by the Rayak evictions: Houch El Rafka, Sariin, Tamnin and Qsarnaba. The project has brought together 120 Syrian refugees and Lebanese people in order to improve the capacities of local communities, improve social cohesion and mitigate possible tensions.

About Nabad Association for Development
The Nabad association is a non-profit non-governmental organization founded in 2013 that works toward sustainable development of individuals and society. It aims to raise public awareness on citizenship, child protection, democracy, human rights, the promotion of gender equality, youth and women empowerment, and establish the concept of tolerance, conflict resolution and citizen participation.

About the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF)
LHF is one of OCHA’s Country Based Pooled Funds (CBPF), established in 2014 following the decentralization of the Regional Syria Fund. Under the overall authority of the Humanitarian Coordinator, it plays a key role in funding urgent humanitarian needs in Lebanon by injecting funding into prioritized and underfunded sectors.

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