Message from the United Nations in Lebanon

Throughout 2015, the partnership between Lebanon and the United Nations grew in depth and magnitude to take on a whole of Lebanon dimension, thanks to ever closer cooperation in the areas of peace and security, stability and socio-economic stabilization in the face of a complex and challenging reality.

The protagonists of this partnership, its main drivers of success, have been the citizens and communities of Lebanon, and the leaders who have worked responsibly in support of a national interest that is rooted in inclusion and equity.

At the same time, the challenges of 2015 have taught us especially that Lebanon is a precious public good not only for its citizens, but for the region and beyond. Lebanon’s continuing stability and prosperity is therefore a matter of collective responsibility for us all. It is essential that the partnerships developed in the past year be strengthened again in the next. The UN looks forward to working closely with all of its partners in Lebanon, and with new ones, in 2016.

Sigrid Kaag
Special Coordinator for Lebanon

Philippe Lazzarini
Deputy Special Coordinator
Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
About the UN in Lebanon

The UN in Lebanon is a family of 23 UN agencies, funds and programmes, a peacekeeping mission and a political mission. Some of its offices have been in Lebanon since 1948, and the UN’s presence has accompanied the Lebanese people through times of both prosperity and adversity. Throughout those years, the UN has been in Lebanon to help the government respond to Lebanon’s security, political, human rights, development and humanitarian challenges. To do this, the UN system joins forces together, with government institutions, international partners and Lebanese and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to offer Lebanon the broad support it needs.

The UN has an impact on almost every aspect of life in Lebanon
UN activities in Lebanon offer support in almost every aspect of life: from good offices to peacekeeping, health to education, humanitarian to human rights, economy to environment. UN treaties are the framework for many laws that govern life here. UN assistance programmes directly reached well over one million people in 2015 alone. The entire UN family is supporting the Government of Lebanon to maintain peace and stability, which we believe sets the scene for development and prosperity. These activities – aimed at tackling the issues that matter most – are made possible by the incredible diversity of mandates under which UN agencies in Lebanon operate.

We fight for universal human values
The UN exists to give a voice to the voiceless. Our job is to help every individual enjoy his or her full rights as a citizen. Everything we do, every issue we analyse and every problem we try to solve, is approached from a human rights perspective. How does the garbage crisis relate to the rights of Lebanon’s citizens,
and how can we mitigate it? How do we make sure the rights of all, be they Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinian or Lebanese, are upheld in an equal manner? How do we guarantee every child enjoys their right to education? These are all big questions we have analysed, and tried to answer.

In upholding the values of the UN, our staff often work in troubled environments and make personal sacrifices. The UN is not just a job: our lives are dedicated to the people we serve.

We’re many, but we don’t work alone
The UN does not act on its own. Everything we do happens through partnerships with the Government of Lebanon, other multilateral organizations and civil society, including universities and NGOs. These partnerships drive up standards, get the right people (or organizations) doing the right jobs, help us learn from each other, and allow us to share the costs of our work. By drawing on the extensive human capital Lebanon has to offer, the UN conducts its research and implements its activities mostly through national staff and Lebanese organizations.

We can’t do everything… but we do everything we can
The UN was here before the Syria war, and will likely remain after it, to continue accompanying the government and people of Lebanon to meet global development objectives. Since 2012 one of the UN’s top priorities has been helping Lebanon overcome the impact of the Syria crisis and help the people who are directly affected by it. In additions, the UN’s long-standing cooperation to support governance and reform, inclusive dialogue, poverty reduction and the environment has continued, to address Lebanon’s long term underlying structural issues.
A uniquely close partnership: 70 years of the UN and Lebanon

In 2015 the UN celebrated its 70th birthday. From its very conception, Lebanon has represented the UN principles of diversity, coexistence and respect for fundamental freedoms. Lebanon was a founding member of the United Nations in 1945. The first Lebanese Ambassador to the UN, Charles Habib Malek, helped lay the foundations of international human rights law, as a drafter of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Ambassador Malek also chaired several key UN bodies, including the Security Council in 1953-1954. As a member of the United Nations General Assembly, Lebanon has helped to draft or ratify thousands of international laws and conventions that affect almost every aspect of people’s lives around the globe. Lebanon has also influenced global decisions on international peace and security by representing the Middle East on the United Nations Security Council (most recently in 2010-2011).

The UN has a long-standing commitment to Lebanon and its people. Its first office in Beirut was opened in 1948 to help the Government of Lebanon provide assistance for the thousands of Palestinians fleeing to Lebanon. Six of the UN’s eight Secretaries-General visited Lebanon at least once during their tenure – including the current Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and his predecessor, Kofi Annan.

Achieving the sovereignty and stability of Lebanon is an effort that unites people from all over the world: resolutions in New York have sent soldiers from 40 countries, thousands of kilometres from home, to protect the people of Lebanon. The UN Security Council regularly discusses Lebanon, and UN Security Council Resolution 1701 (which ended the devastating 2006 war) is still at work helping maintain stability and security along the Blue Line.

In recent years, the pressure on Lebanon in dealing with the refugee influx has further deepened the partnership between the UN and the Lebanese Government. In this urgent crisis we have had to find more and more effective ways to coordinate with each other. We’re proud to say that our team is standing with Lebanon as it faces these enormous challenges.

In 2015, as we celebrated the 70th anniversary of this partnership, we reflected on the many moments of beauty and humanity, as well as times of adversity we have experienced together. Through good times and bad, this has been a uniquely close partnership.
Lebanon at a glance in 2015

2015 was not an easy year for Lebanon. But though there were many challenges to peace, security and development, many achievements highlighted Lebanon’s own resilience and the commitment of its friends.

The presidency remained vacant, but politicians repeatedly came together to try to resolve their differences. They succeeded in holding national dialogue in the parliament, many informal discussions over the presidency between opposing political groups, and Parliament and Cabinet passed urgent laws to unfreeze international loan agreements. These efforts did not unblock the political paralysis, but played an important role in calming tensions at crucial moments and shielding the country from the worst effects of political divisions.

Despite regular attacks, the Lebanese Armed Forces succeeded in effectively defending the border with Syria, facing shelling, shooting and aerial incursions into Lebanese border areas. In south Lebanon, UN good offices helped defuse and prevent reoccurrence of a dangerous escalation between the Lebanese and Israeli sides of the Blue Line.

Beirut was struck by a terrorist attack from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which tragically took the lives of 42 people in Bourj al Barajneh. But Lebanon refused to fall victim to sectarian strife, and thanks to the continued efforts of the security forces, a number of other terrorist plots were foiled. Sixteen of the Lebanese servicemen held hostage by foreign armed groups were released in December 2015 (although as the year ended, nine security forces personnel remained in ISIL custody).
During 2015, Lebanon continued to host over a million refugees. Living conditions for the refugees declined, as refugees have largely depleted any assets they arrived with, becoming more dependent on humanitarian assistance. Hosting a large, often poor, refugee community has continued to have an impact on infrastructure, public services, job markets and community cohesion. Conditions for most refugees are very tough, and evidence shows that the poorest Lebanese are struggling too.

And yet, many Lebanese continue to display the utmost generosity and many have chosen to seize the opportunity to make the best of the situation. A huge international aid effort continued, and a slight increase in funding allowed Lebanon’s partners to support the most vulnerable Syrian refugees, and respond ever more effectively to the economic impact of population movements and political tensions. Funding for the response reached $1.3 billion in 2015, helping Lebanese institutions and over a million people to cope.

2015 was also the year of the rubbish crisis. Strikes and disagreements led to piles of rubbish accumulating in the streets all over Lebanon, at the height of the summer heat. In December 2015 the government agreed a controversial plan to export garbage, after major civil society protests calling for transparent and safe waste management. The crisis, though distasteful, raised public awareness of environmental issues and the importance of household recycling.
About this report

This report aims to highlight some of the UN’s key achievements in Lebanon in 2015, in three main categories:

1. Supporting the Government of Lebanon in maintaining peace and security
2. Strengthening Lebanese institutions
3. Helping the people most in need

All the UN’s work in Lebanon stems from the understanding that there can be no peace without development, and no development without peace. We consider every intervention, including our humanitarian and development work, a key ingredient to Lebanon’s stability.

This report is a reflection of some of that work in 2015, but not a comprehensive catalogue. Behind every achievement and every story in these pages, there are many more we could not cover here.
Supporting the Government of Lebanon to maintain peace and security

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Supporting the Government of Lebanon to maintain peace and security

Introduction
For 70 years the UN has been striving to help build a stable, safe Lebanon, hand in hand with the Lebanese people. It has not always been easy, but together we have made progress. Throughout these years, the UN Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions in support to Lebanon. Most prominent among these in recent years has been resolution 1701, which ended the devastating war in 2006 and which remains a cornerstone for continued stability and security in south Lebanon.

Peace and security are common themes running through everything we do: we believe that by strengthening the economy, education, human rights and the Lebanese state, we help to make Lebanon a safer and more stable place.

UNSCOL
Across the country and internationally, the UN has pursued its long term efforts to bolster peace and stability. UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Sigrid Kaag, offered her ‘good offices’ as an impartial broker in Lebanon’s peace and security. Her international role kept Lebanon on the agenda of global fora, highlighting the need to elect a president, halt the erosion of Lebanese institutions and strengthen the economy. Ms Kaag’s work has also been encouraging the international community to increase support to the Lebanese Armed Forces, recognizing their efforts in the border areas to protect the people of Lebanon and its territorial integrity as well as to combat terrorism.

UNIFIL
The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) works at the sharp end of peace and security. UNIFIL is a peacekeeping mission of 10,000 soldiers from 40 countries, and around 1,000 Lebanese and international civilian staff. Thanks to the efforts of UNIFIL and its many partners, the people of south Lebanon have experienced a period of unprecedented calm since 2006. Throughout 2015, UNIFIL peacekeepers and the Lebanese Army jointly carried out daily patrols in south Lebanon. These patrols allow UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities to monitor the Blue Line, keep local communities safe, and reinforce government authority in the south.

Working for peace with communities
In 2015 UNIFIL teams continued to invest in south Lebanon, carrying out 400 activities per day: rebuilding roads, repairing schools, hospitals and historic sites. UNIFIL doctors and dentists helped over 55,000 Lebanese patients for free, and vets looked after 48,000 animals. This work helps make progress towards the day the region will be stable and secure for all its citizens, and the peacekeepers will be able to leave.
In other regions in Lebanon, the UN delivered community peacebuilding projects in the west, central and north Bekaa, Wadi Khaled, Akkar, Akroum and Beirut southern suburbs. These projects bring people together to design ‘Mechanisms for Social Stability’: groups who work together to resolve disagreements before they escalate. Almost 400 Lebanese and Syrians have stepped forward to join these groups.

Is our work with Lebanese and Syrian communities genuinely helping Lebanese stability?

We knew that our project with Lebanese municipalities, the ‘Lebanese Host Communities Support Programme’, was having a positive impact on the lives of nearly 1.2 million Lebanese. But to check that our work was also helping stability, the UN used a new tool called Sensemaker, which analyses people’s perceptions of their local communities and sense of security and stability. We found that the programme was indeed tangibly improving relationships between Lebanese and Syrians in communities where they live side-by-side. Despite growing frustrations amongst communities, no serious incidents of inter-communal tension have been reported to date.

Bread and salt: Young Lebanese and Syrians share their views – and a meal

The Majdel Anjar ‘Mechanism for Social Stability’ organized three days of community fun, learning and sharing, in September 2015. The community decided to establish a human rights and conflict monitor, and a socio-economic incubator for small businesses. Around 450 people from the area came to a Lebanese-Syrian open discussion, campfire and saj mana‘eech cook-out. Lebanese and Syrians spent the evening together in the fresh air, enjoying dinner and sharing stories about their lives.

“We didn’t expect a small country like Lebanon to be able to host and accommodate us. We thank the Lebanese for opening their safe doors to us, while many others didn’t.”
– Wi’am, Chtaura

“We always have the choice to see the cup half-full or half-empty: Syria is a much bigger country, and our capacity to host the huge number of displaced is decreasing every day. Yet, we look at the situation from a humanitarian perspective and we don’t let it affect our relationship with the Syrians.”
– Halimeh, Majdel Anjar
Youth for peace and security

“Youth are our future, our inspiration and our motivation. It is for them we need to transform the way we live to make their future in this world viable.”
– Philippe Lazzarini, Deputy Special Coordinator/Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon

In December 2015 the United Nations Security Council adopted an historic resolution on youth, peace and security. Resolution 2250 recognizes the urgent need to engage young peacebuilders in promoting peace and countering extremism.

Lebanon has long recognized the importance of youth in decision-making, and endorsed a National Youth Policy in 2014. In preparation for the development of an action plan, the UN worked with Notre Dame University (NDU) in 2015 and trained students to collect information about how ministries and municipalities engage young people.

UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund), UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) have been helping implement the National Youth Policy by offering life skills and conflict management training to young people living in areas of conflict. The UN also helped offer better economic and social opportunities for young people, and trained them in managing volunteers, pursuing gender equality, and protecting Lebanon’s cultural heritage in unstable times.
Women working: Gender and empowerment in 2015

Women play an essential role in peace and security: so crucial, in fact, that the UN Security Council adopted a resolution (number 1325) enshrining it. Lebanon has a National Action Plan to ensure women are fully engaged in society. The UN is supporting delivery of this plan, working with members of parliament, ministries and civil society and offering tailor-made training to many staff on how to embed gender into policy making.

Many women in Lebanon tell us that they want, and need, to work. But in Lebanon, as elsewhere, they sometimes need an extra hand to overcome disadvantages connected with social norms or lack of training. In 2015 the UN trained over 350 women in north Lebanon in crochet, flower arrangement, accessories, needlepoint, carpet making, and mobile phone maintenance. For many of these women it was the first time they sold something they had made, and their first chance to feel the rush of independently earning money to support their family.

Conflict and poverty in recent years have made women in Lebanon more vulnerable to risks such as early marriage and gender based violence. Training delivered by the UN taught both women and men how to intervene when they suspect gender based violence or abuse. So far 130 men and women have completed the training. Many of the men said they had a ‘eureka moment’ which changed their way of dealing with their community and families. Twelve trainees then learned how to become trainers themselves and ran training sessions in their hometowns. In 2016 they will spread more ‘eureka moments’, helping both men and women realize their power to eradicate gender based violence.

‘Social Development Centres’ (SDCs) were crucial in empowering women through local communities. The SDCs are 57 spaces across Lebanon, offered by the Ministry of Social Affairs, many of which have been renovated and supported by the UN. Each one has a team and volunteers, trained in tackling domestic violence, early marriage, sexual and reproductive health, sexual commercial exploitation and human trafficking, by the UN and Lebanese NGO ABAAD.
Supporting the Government of Lebanon to maintain peace and security

Combating violence against women
A group of UN agencies (including the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF (the UN Children's Fund), and the UN High Commission for Refugees, UNHCR), in partnership with Lebanese non-governmental organization KAFA, have been combating violence against women for over 15 years. In 2015 they offered counselling, care and legal support to almost 600 women and girls at risk of violence, and trained 565 humanitarian, health and legal professionals. The video for their joint national campaign on early marriage travelled across the country on social media, as part of the campaign ‘16 Days To End Violence Against Women.’

Making mouneh
With Fair Trade Lebanon, UN Women (the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women) set up in 2015 innovative women’s cooperatives making mouneh (Lebanese preserves) and other agricultural products to sell. The cooperatives involve 400 Lebanese and Syrian women, and have already helped generate an income for over 250 families. Fair Trade Lebanon experts provided technical training, certification and packaging, and helped with marketing. By working together – including by debating the best recipes – these women have built strong partnerships across communities, helping peace and security as well as boosting their families’ income.
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Standing with Lebanese institutions

In 2015 Lebanon’s institutions faced the challenge of continuing to deliver public services, despite the massive population increase since 2012. In 2015, over $171.5 million in UN support was delivered to Lebanese institutions, strengthening public services like education, health and waste management, and making them more sustainable for the future.

The trust-building measures which have made this close cooperation possible have strengthened the delivery of state institutions and rapidly improved transparency. The UN remains committed to ensuring the highest levels of transparency and accountability in the response.

Brain gain: Bringing Lebanese expatriate skills back home

‘The expatriates come in with fresh eyes to tackle problems we are all too familiar with in Lebanon. They speak the same language, share the same culture – and so they know what issues are important and how to approach them.’

- Ariane el-Mas, TOKTEN Project Manager

The Lebanese diaspora is a huge global network of often highly skilled people and professionals. To harness these worldwide skills and abilities, the UN Transfer of Knowledge Through Expatriate Nationals (TOKTEN) programme brings Lebanese expatriate volunteers back to Lebanon to share their expertise.

In 2015 TOKTEN supported a major cyber security conference with the Lebanese Central Bank, Internal Security Forces and Lebanese Armed Forces. Expertise from Lebanese expatriates has made TOKTEN a reference point for the public sector in cyber security, improving standards, understanding and capacity in Lebanon’s home-grown institutions – and allowing the diaspora the chance to give something back to their country of origin.
In 2015 about 350,000 children enrolled in Lebanese primary schools and 1,500 youth learners was enrolled in secondary schools.

Supporting institutions: Education

350,000 children go back to school
“It was difficult at first to come back to learn but then it got easier.” – Sidra, 11, Chouf

In 2015 the UN family, the Government of Lebanon and local and international NGOs all pulled together in an emergency effort to offer formal primary education to all children in Lebanon, regardless of nationality. The result: almost 450,000 children accessed learning opportunities, and 350,000 children enrolled in Lebanese primary schools.

Pulling together
Together the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), the UN and NGO partners massively increased primary school enrolment numbers.

In the 2014-2015 school year, 101,515 non-Lebanese children (mostly Syrian) and 30,933 Lebanese children were supported to enrol in formal education, plus 6,118 Palestine children from Syria who attended 60 schools in the Palestinian camps or gatherings.

In 2015-2016, all parents (Lebanese and non-Lebanese) were exempted from enrolment fees, and refugee children were no longer required to present a valid residency permit to enrol. Schools across the country opened up in the afternoons for a second shift, to accommodate all the extra children.

As a result, a total of 147,285 non-Lebanese and 197,000 Lebanese children were registered in formal education in 2015-2016: almost 350,000 in all. MEHE also increased support to secondary education, and 35 secondary schools opened their doors to enrol up to 1,500 youth learners in the 2015-2016 academic year.

In 2015, the UN and NGO partners sent supplies to 1,200 first shift and 240 second shift schools, providing essential learning materials to both Lebanese and non-Lebanese children. In 2015, school transport was provided to a total of 59,872 children, based on distance to schools, safety and protection and the family’s vulnerability.

Helping kids learn
Children who have missed years of school need a little extra help before they can go back to class. So 5,300 Lebanese and Syrian children attended the innovative, free Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP), for children aged 9-17 who have been out of school for more than two years. The programme fills the gaps in Arabic, French, English, mathematics, science and life skills, preparing the child to sit entrance exams for the
Standing with Lebanese institutions

96 public schools were refurbished and equipped.

29 schools became officially ‘violence free’.

The biggest heroes in this story: teachers and school staff.

Lebanese public system. Delivering this programme also meant training 600 teachers. This groundbreaking work was made possible by a $94 million investment through the UN and international donors, notably Germany and the EU.

**Boosting schools and institutions**

To make sure our support had a sustainable benefit, the UN channelled $1.6 million through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and supported 24 ministry staff in 2015. The UN and its partners also improved public education standards: we refurbished and equipped 96 public schools, trained school staff, and sent almost $50 million to schools to prepare themselves for the extra students. In 2015 many schools became healthier – thanks to health screening equipment delivered by the UN – and safer, with 29 schools becoming officially ‘violence free’in 2015.

**Engaging communities**

We mobilized over 100 Refugee Outreach Volunteers, to inform Syrian parents about education opportunities for their children, encourage them to enroll, and spot and refer children who need special attention. By involving parents and communities we hope to increase enrolment and keep more students in school once they start.

All this work was delivered under the leadership of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, and in cooperation with the schools themselves, and expert non-governmental organizations. The UN family is enormously proud to have helped 350,000 more children seize the chance to fulfill their potential.

This has all been possible thanks to the biggest heroes in this story: teachers and school staff who are delivering the best quality education to a growing number of students. Their investment in education today is an investment for the present and the future of the region, preventing the loss of a generation.
Coding the future

Coding and technological skills will be essential for every young person today, in the job market of tomorrow. So UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and the Lebanese American University in Beirut started training teachers and 85 secondary school students in programming skills and computing thinking. Eventually, we hope, coding and computing will become part of all primary education in Lebanon.
Supporting institutions: Health

400,000 extra patients got the care they needed

Lebanese health facilities, hospitals and primary health care (PHC) centres have seen an increase in use of up to 50 percent over the last few years. This has greatly affected their infrastructure and financial sustainability. Services offering maternal and child health care and treatments for non-communicable diseases have seen the greatest increase in demand. The UN aimed to help mitigate the effects of this situation by investing in Lebanese health care institutions.

In 2015, 54 primary health centres were renovated, 180 benefited from better medical equipment, and 8 public hospitals were equipped. A total of 435 primary health care centres received medications for chronic diseases.

In 2015, 54 primary health centres were renovated, 180 benefited from better medical equipment, and 2,530 staff received training. We equipped eight public hospitals to deal with emergency, obstetrics and neonatal intensive care, and a further 26 received much-needed medical equipment and lifesaving emergency drugs. We delivered cardiac monitors, infant resuscitators and ultrasound machines to over 200 primary health care centres and eight public hospitals. A total of 435 primary health care centres received medications for chronic diseases to serve 150,000 patients.

UN officials also supported the Ministry of Public Health as it developed a system to monitor and respond to epidemics and infectious disease. To do this, the UN channelled an estimated $9.4 million via the Ministry of Public Health and health centres, and is supporting 91 key health jobs.

To improve efficiency and make services more accessible, with UN support 29 municipalities further integrated their health care systems, working with 15 Social Development Centres, 12 primary health centres and 72 schools to deliver comprehensive care.

As a result, these efforts brought health care to an additional 400,000 patients in 2015. A study commissioned by the UN in late 2015 asked refugees and Lebanese hosts about primary health care: both communities said they were now largely satisfied.
In 2015, 384,888 children under five were vaccinated against polio keeping Lebanon ‘polio free’.

Keeping Lebanon polio free

The Ministry of Public Health, with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF (the United Nations Children’s Fund) and with UNHCR’s support, concluded their final extra polio vaccination campaign, as part of their ongoing efforts to keep children in Lebanon safe from polio. In one seven-day campaign alone, 384,888 children under five were vaccinated. Around 98.4 percent of under-fives in Lebanon have now been immunized against polio, part of the largest regional vaccination programme in the Middle East.

In 2015 the UN effort exceeded its overall child vaccination targets by 150 percent, delivering routine vaccinations to over 400,000 children under 5 years old.

Adapting to Lebanon’s new health needs

With the rapid growth of Lebanon’s population, health care professionals are not only seeing more patients, but also learning to treat different types of health issues arising from conflict and crisis. In 2015, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health partnered to adapt to these new needs, and updated Lebanon’s guidelines for reproductive health care. WHO has also adapted the guidelines for childhood illnesses care and the guidelines for clinical management protocols for the most common health conditions in primary health care centres.

By partnering with the Ministry, the UN has expanded the capacity of public health services to offer high quality, specialized services for both refugees and Lebanese citizens. The new guidelines are now used by doctors, nurses and other health care professionals to treat survivors of rape, to prevent and manage HIV/AIDS, and deliver essential reproductive health, child health and other health care in crisis situations.
689,000 people gained access to improved solid waste disposal, in 2015.

Supporting institutions: Waste management

**Not such a rubbish year?**
Many will remember 2015 as the year of rubbish: when household waste overflowed into the streets of Lebanese towns and cities, due to strikes and political disagreements. While the crisis was and remains an environmental catastrophe, it did increase awareness of the dangers of environmental degradation, disease and risks to the water supply. The UN helped make practical suggestions on many fronts, including the management of solid waste and water.

**Solid waste**
We helped the Lebanese authorities seek solutions to the garbage crisis in several ways:

- **Our experts helped make a plan.** UN expertise informed the solutions discussed by the National Solid Waste Committee. With UN assistance, the committee proposed short- and long-term strategies, which were initially adopted by the Council of Ministers. The UN system has also mobilized global support from developed countries showcasing their experiences in Integrated Waste Management approaches, highlighting the need for a holistic and visionary approach to the crisis at all levels. Our UN team has presented a comprehensive plan to address:
  1. Institutional and legal arrangements;
  2. Applying the Global Waste Management Outlook principles to waste management;
  3. Public-private partnership;
  4. Communications, education and outreach;
  5. Mobilizing international and domestic resources and
  6. Piloting a state-of-the art waste management system.

- **We helped manage the waste.**
A total of 689,000 people gained access to improved solid waste disposal in 2015, through UN support, including the operation of solid waste facilities in over 400 sites across Lebanon. The UN provided vehicles and garbage bins to municipalities across Lebanon, as well as 14 garbage trucks for municipalities in the Bekaa and North Lebanon. Thanks to an international UN-led effort, waste collection facilities and transport equipment arrived in 2015 for vulnerable communities, including over 5,000 large waste bins. Technical experts put together waste management plans with five municipalities. We also raised citizens’ awareness of how to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.
We prevented disease.
With EU support, UN health experts updated the guidelines for handling 43 most commonly communicable diseases, and trained Lebanese health personnel. The UN mobilized people to keep Lebanon cleaner, through workshops, Scouts activities and festivals on hygiene, waste management, hand washing and water treatment. Hygiene promotion and close partnership with the Ministry of Public Health helped minimize the spread of sanitation-related diseases such as typhoid and hepatitis.

We equipped Lebanon to protect its environment.
Experts from the UN are working with the Ministry of Environment with funding from the World Bank and the Italian Government, towards cleaner factories and less pollution through a national action plan for industry. We helped equip policymakers to meet the requirements of the international environmental conventions and protocols that Lebanon has ratified. UN experts assisted Lebanon in taking an active part in the Paris meeting of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), a crucial global forum hailed by the UN Secretary General as “a monumental triumph for people and our planet.” Lebanon was among 195 Parties to the UNFCCC who pledged to curb emissions, strengthen resilience and joined to take common climate action. These agreements set the stage for progress in ending poverty, strengthening peace and ensuring a life of dignity and opportunity for all.

We helped vulnerable families become more energy efficient, saving them money and protecting the environment.
Through the UN’s work in partnership with the Lebanese authorities, 1,027,752 Lebanese benefited from investments in communal water infrastructure. Solar-powered lighting helped 875 vulnerable households cope with power cuts in the Akkar and Bekaa Valley, and 500 solar-powered street lights were installed in the Akkar. A UN project delivered 594 energy efficient stoves and two winters’ supply of environmentally friendly briquettes to the most vulnerable people in the Akkar and Bekaa regions.

1,027,752 Lebanese benefited from investments in communal water infrastructure.
Supporting institutions: Water

The garbage crisis led many people in Lebanon to ask whether contamination was spreading to groundwater reserves. The UN worked with the Mouhanna Foundation on a policy paper which scrutinized the crisis, its impact on Lebanon’s environment, infrastructure, health and landscape, and possible solutions. Among other recommendations, the paper advised that water would become contaminated unless the waste crisis was resolved in an environmentally sound way.

This work complemented an ongoing UN study, with funding from the Government of Italy, on ground water resources. The study – the first of its kind since 1972 – showed alarming drops in groundwater levels in some parts of Lebanon, mainly due to the over-exploitation of wells in cities and agricultural regions. Sea water intrusion was also a serious problem along the coast. Experts concluded that Lebanon needs better monitoring, understanding and management of water resources, and tighter oversight of groundwater extraction and licensing of wells.

To meet the need for better water quality monitoring and surveillance, in 2015 the UN and Ministry of Public Health set up water monitoring laboratories, funded by the European Union, which are now testing water for 160 municipalities. We also rehabilitated and equipped the water testing laboratories of eight public hospitals in Tripoli, Halba, Zahle, Baalbeck, Marjeyoun, Saida, Dahr el Bachek and Rafic Hariri University Hospital in Beirut, and recruited staff to run them for the next two years.

Everyday water

Lebanon suffers from water shortages and a lack of national infrastructure to bring water to families, especially in remote areas. When the UN and municipalities asked residents in Wadi Khaled, Akkar, what they needed most, the top request was a domestic water supply. In 2015 more than two million people benefited from improved access to water, through UN programmes delivered with Lebanese institutions. Together we repaired or constructed 83km of sewerage networks, and helped 40,000 people by building water pumps, reservoirs and water networks. UN support is also de-sludging 18,000 cubic metres of waste water every month: enough sludge to fill seven Olympic swimming pools.
Supporting institutions: municipalities

For many citizens, municipalities are the first institution to turn to for support on local issues. They have also been on the front lines of service delivery in areas where the population has massively increased in recent years, and are often called upon to mediate between refugee and host communities. UN support helped 244 municipalities in 2015, along with 11 Unions of Municipalities, equipping them to respond to increased demand and pressure on services.

During 2015 the UN expanded its flagship initiative, the Lebanese Host Communities Support Programme. This programme supports Lebanese communities hosting large numbers of refugees, and is delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Social Affairs. Municipal leaders take on the planning and prioritization of urgent needs, identified through community consultations, for local services or job opportunities, which the UN then helps to deliver. The aim is to reduce the pressure on local services and employment in municipalities where the refugee population is at least 25 percent (and often much more). In 2015 the programme delivered 327 projects in 109 host communities – from football fields to water networks, entrepreneurship training to school improvements. In total, around 1.2 million Lebanese hosts and over 332,000 Syrian displaced people benefited in 2015 from these activities.

The UN also supported the efforts of the Ministry of the Interior and Municipalities, to develop a code of conduct and operating procedures for municipal police forces, designed to build effectiveness by responding to the unique needs of the community, and to align with international standards.
From local to national: Supporting governance

In 2015 the UN continued many ongoing efforts to strengthen Lebanon’s national institutions, building on the gains at a local level. The UN worked with the Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform to deliver Lebanon’s institutional reform strategy, training nearly 2,000 civil servants in computer skills and change management, and giving citizens better access to information.

The UN also organized Lebanon’s Universal Periodic Review at the Human Rights Council in November 2015. The review is an opportunity for civil society and the international community to scrutinize Lebanon’s human rights record, based on reports prepared by the government. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) then launched a three-year EU-funded project to help Lebanon implement its recommendations: establishing a national standing committee to follow international human rights mechanisms, supporting the setup of much needed national human rights institutions, and boosting the role of civil society in promoting human rights.

UN staff continued preparations with the Ministry of Interior for transparent and inclusive elections, and launched a new three-year project with the Ministry of Finance to build better policy and public finance management. The UN also supported the Prime Minister’s Office to develop socio-economic and sustainable development plans, and is advising on the legal framework for Lebanon’s oil and gas resources.

The UN built on long-term Lebanese efforts to prepare to respond to natural disasters. Municipalities across the country have prepared disaster response plans and set up operation rooms in institutions across the country, including ministries, mouhafazas, municipalities and cazas. In January 2015 these plans were tested when Storm Zina struck the coastline: municipalities on the sea front, such as Byblos, assessed damage and helped local businesses protect their property, following UN support. In March 2015 Lebanon shared its expertise at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, in Sendai City, Japan.
Supporting those most in need

- Managing the impact of the Syria crisis
- Supporting Palestine Refugees
- The Economy
Supporting those most in need: Managing the impact of the Syria crisis

In 2015 the UN continued to help Lebanon support a large vulnerable Syrian refugee population – and the economic, social, demographic, political and security consequences for Lebanon. Humanitarian and development aid related to the Syria crisis has amounted to over $3.4 billion in Lebanon since 2012, including $1.3 billion in 2015. This assistance has benefited a million Syrian refugees, and well over a million Lebanese citizens in 2015. The UN is responding to the crisis, not only to fulfill its humanitarian mandate, but also to bolster Lebanese stability by laying the foundations for peaceful coexistence until the refugees can return home.

Despite this huge effort, the situation is getting tougher. The poorest people in Lebanon faced greater hardship in 2015, because there were fewer resources and higher unemployment. While there are still 1.1 million Syrian refugees to take care of, 1.5 million vulnerable Lebanese are also feeling the consequences of the pressure on resources. Almost 1.2 million people in Lebanon today live in extreme poverty, with less than $2.4 a day - an increase of 75 percent from 2014.

In 2015 52 percent of Syrian refugees could not afford the basic survival expenditures ($2.90 per day). Refugees also became more indebted, borrowing to pay for food and essentials because their savings have been used up. Around 89 percent of Syrian refugees now owe money to friends, relatives and lenders, at an average of $842 per household.

The UN is at the centre of the efforts to support Lebanon in dealing with these shocking realities. We were instrumental in the creation of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP), a joint approach to the Syria crisis by the Government of Lebanon, the UN, international donors and NGOs. This plan helped us deliver, with our partners, assistance on an enormous scale. Over two million people benefited from improved access to water supply, and 970,000 vulnerable Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians received monthly food assistance. Around 950,000 people received support to face the winter. $24m was distributed as seasonal cash assistance, and 383,700 people benefited from improved shelter interventions – as well as health, education and job creation initiatives targeting over a million people.
Supporting those most in need

As part of the massive response effort, we’ve also been offering protection to vulnerable refugees. Those who need psychosocial support are finding assistance in 54 safe spaces throughout Lebanon, benefiting over 119,000 women, girls and boys, Lebanese and Syrians alike, who were at risk or survivors of violence. We have also supported the Government of Lebanon to ensure effective humanitarian border management, so that the most vulnerable are treated in line with humanitarian norms. And over 37,000 Syrian nationals benefited from legal counseling on renewal procedures and civil documentation such as registering births and marriages.

So far, just over 18,000 refugees have officially been resettled outside Lebanon. The UN estimates that around 10 percent of refugees in Lebanon in fact need resettlement: especially women and children who have been affected by violence and abuse. We know that some refugees, including Palestinians in Lebanon, feel so hopeless that they are prepared to take the dangerous trip across the Mediterranean waters. But when we surveyed refugees in the Bekaa Valley, most said they were not considering taking a boat to Europe or elsewhere, finding it too risky and too expensive. Far more resettlement places are needed in 2016 to help these vulnerable people.

The enormous response so far has been possible in part because the UN has won the trust of its partners as a reliable implementing partner with reach all over Lebanon. Responding to the Syria crisis has required a unique new way of working between the UN, the Government of Lebanon and international donors and NGOs. Last year this took the form of the 2015-2016 Lebanon Crisis Response Plan – a plan that covers humanitarian and stabilization aid for all people affected by the crisis, be they Syrian, Lebanese or Palestinian.

Funding for the crisis response went up in 2015, thanks to the generous contribution of international donors who have maintained their support despite the long duration of the crisis. But because needs are greater than resources, there was still a 40 percent shortfall, and this led to some difficult choices. Food assistance had to be reduced, and UNRWA was forced to suspend cash for housing assistance for Palestine refugees from Syria. These changes had drastic consequences: to cope, families withdrew children from school, sent their kids to work, and reduced their food intake. Without increased support or the ability to self-sustain, families will have to employ more of these ‘negative coping strategies’, which could become irreversible.
How do Lebanese hosts really feel about Syrian refugees?

The UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) worked with Saint Joseph University to survey Lebanese people’s views on the refugees. The survey found that people are much more positive than the media might suggest. We’ve heard many examples of individual and collective acts of kindness and bravery. People told us they were worried about the impact on Lebanon’s stability of a large refugee population. So we set up ‘conflict mitigating mechanisms’ (see page 31), and there have been no major incidents of violence.

In 2015, unemployment rose to 20 percent (30 percent among youth). Lebanese hosts also told us they felt that the income of Lebanese families had decreased in areas hosting refugees. So we have invested in livelihoods and training for Lebanese workers. We have been finding out where the highest pressures are on Lebanon, and are targeting resources there. Based on UN research, done jointly with the Government of Lebanon, a new updated map was released showing the 251 most vulnerable cadastres in Lebanon – home to 67 percent of Lebanon’s poor citizens and hosting 87 percent of all refugees. These are the priority areas for our support in 2016.
As economic, social and security conditions toughened in 2015, pressure increased on the already struggling community of Palestine refugees in Lebanon. Around 270,000 Palestine refugees in Lebanon depend on UN support, as well as some 42,000 Palestine Refugees from Syria. Because they are not formally citizens of another state, Palestine refugees are unable to claim the same rights as other foreigners living and working in Lebanon: for example, they cannot work in as many as 20 professions. Around 53 percent of the Palestine refugees in Lebanon live in the 12 recognized Palestine refugee camps, all of which suffer from serious problems, including poverty, overcrowding, unemployment, poor housing conditions and lack of infrastructure. In total, there are over 200,000 Palestine refugees living in poverty (under $208 per person per month).

The UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) was set up in 1949 by the UN General Assembly, to help Palestine refugees achieve their full potential in the difficult circumstances under which they live. UNRWA has been working in Lebanon since 1950. Most Palestine refugees in Lebanon rely on UNRWA’s support to access basic services including education and health. The UN recognizes that UNRWA will need to continue providing services to Palestine refugees to live, grow and develop, until an international political solution to the Arab-Israel conflict is reached. By supporting some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in Lebanon, UNRWA is also helping to boost Lebanon’s internal and external stability.

During the 2014-2015 school year, 1,700 UNRWA teachers taught 38,173 elementary, preparatory and secondary school Palestine refugee children, in 68 schools: an investment in conflict prevention and a peaceful future. UNRWA brought in 263 new teachers to support the response for Palestine refugee children from Syria. UNRWA also provided nearly 42,000 Palestine refugees from Syria with essential cash assistance and gave winterization assistance to over 10,700 Palestine refugee families from Syria.

In 2015 UNRWA staff provided more than 1.5 million medical consultations to Palestine refugees. Over 35,000 UN-funded hospitalizations were provided to Palestine refugees who needed help, and UNRWA also supported Palestine Red Crescent hospitals to make sure refugees can access health care when they need it. UNRWA also helped improve the homes and living conditions of people living in poverty in the camps.

In 2015 UNRWA took care of solid waste in the Palestine refugee camps, and educated refugees on...
At least 50 percent of the refugees from Nahr El Bared can now move back into the camp, thanks to UN reconstruction efforts.

how to conserve water, manage garbage, and ensure a healthy environment. The UN improved the water supply to Palestinian refugee camps and helped prevent floods. At least 50 percent of the refugees from Nahr El Bared can now move back into the camp, thanks to UN reconstruction efforts. And when, in mid-2015, violence flared up in the Ein El Helweh camp, Saida, UNRWA assessed the needs of the displaced people who had left the camp, and made sure they could access health services.

It’s not easy for Palestine refugees to work in Lebanon, mainly because of restrictions in Lebanese law and some factors that can bar people from education. UNRWA worked to reduce these barriers and helped get more people into suitable work by offering targeted vocational training (to 1,100 Palestinian young adults in 2015 alone), and advocating with employers to hire Palestine refugees when they have the right skills for the job. And UNRWA helped entrepreneurs generate an income through their own businesses.

UN staff in the camps also work with people who may need extra help, such as people who may have been exposed to violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation. In 2015 the team improved the way they respond to and track these cases, to make sure as many people as possible get the care and support they need.

UNRWA’s first female Camp Service Officer

“Women stay in the camps, they keep watch on all that is happening inside the camp, and they come to me with information, questions on flyers, complaints on abuse, domestic violence, behavior of service providers among many others. Children too, visit me to discuss school. My daughter studies in an UNRWA school, and she likes telling her school mates that I am her mother. The women and children are comfortable talking to me.”

– Ferial Kiwan, Camp Service Officer

Ferial Kiwan joined the UN in December 2014 as UNRWA’s first female Camp Service Officer. A mother of five, she had her youngest child three days before her job interview. Now she is one of the 12 Camp Service Officers, the first woman among them, assigned to the Shatila Camp in southern Beirut.

While Ferial’s mother looks after her children, Ferial spends her working day in meetings, seeing visitors, touring the camp, lending a patient ear to complaints, and taking part in community events.

Case study prepared by Madhumita Sarkar (UNRWA)
In 2015 alone, the UN injected $187 million directly into the Lebanese economy, providing refugees and Lebanese with cash-based assistance to spend on food and essentials in 400 local shops.

10,000 individuals were enrolled in rapid income generating activities, creating the equivalent of $1.6 million additional income for families in need.

The Economy: Creating jobs

Lebanon is categorized as a ‘middle income country’. But economic growth decreased from 8 percent in 2010 to less than 2 percent in 2015. In 2015, 1.5 million Lebanese people were suffering from poverty – and while facing their own economic challenges, this group has also been among the most generous in hosting Syrian refugees. The UN has helped address the economic strain in various ways. In 2015 alone, the UN injected $187 million directly into the Lebanese economy, providing refugees and Lebanese with cash-based assistance to spend on food and essentials in 400 local shops. We also took action to sustain the economy in the longer term, by creating job opportunities in the poorest areas of the country. More jobs mean local communities benefit from a stronger economy, more cash flow, and are more self-reliant instead of depending on uncertain aid flows. So in 2015, 10,000 individuals were enrolled in rapid income generating activities, creating the equivalent of $1.6 million additional income for families in need.

Analysts have found that small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) can be the drivers of employment: in Lebanon, their contribution is especially needed in agriculture, carpentry, paint, textiles and metalwork. So in 2015 the UN has been focusing on these sectors’ most urgent needs, and helping SMEs work more efficiently to give them the best possible chances of success. In 2015, 164 new micro, small- and medium-sized enterprises and cooperatives were established, thanks to innovative support provided by the UN. We gave chicken houses, tools, seeds and food containers to 450 poor Lebanese families returning from Syria, allowing them to grow and sell farm produce. We also offered Lebanese returnees business counselling and investment to set up micro-businesses, such as food stalls, barbers and tailors’ shops.

In Beirut, women from poor families are taking on freelance catering jobs and linking up with the Lebanese Food Bank, thanks to training and coordination by the UN. One of these women has even become a cooking teacher herself. Under an innovative UN assistance scheme, 35,966 households received cash in 2015, allowing them to spend money in local businesses to secure part of their most urgent needs.

Heavy duty wheelbarrows

Jamal Eddin Est has been producing stoves and heavy duty wheelbarrows in Lebanon since 1946. Today they make around 500 stoves per day, for local and export markets. The UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has helped this successful factory increase its production by upgrading specialized machinery, and taught the workers to use the new technology effectively. This type of support has made Lebanese businesses more competitive nationally, regionally and globally.
Supporting those most in need

Understanding the labour force and living conditions in Lebanon

In 2015, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics (CAS) agreed to implement a Lebanon’s Labour Force and Living Conditions Survey. This initiative, funded by the EU, aims to provide better social and economic statistics and yield data on the conditions of work and life in Lebanon. This data will be useful for future policy-making and planning, by offering details on the situation at district level and highlighting regional disparities. So far ILO and CAS have established the platform required to launch the survey, which will be conducted in 2016.

Field to shop to plate: the story of job creation in the Akkar

Research by the International Labour Organization (ILO) on small- and medium-sized enterprises found that workers needed more job-based training, and that business owners needed to know more about export markets, management and marketing. So the UN Development Programme (UNDP) organized training for young people from the Akkar on how to farm some of the region’s strongest produce: potatoes and leafy greens. A third of these young people ended up with internships at the end of the training. The ILO also trained a group of women to process the produce after harvest.

To help get produce to market, the UN repaired a major road in Wadi Khaled, passing through eight municipalities. This in turn created jobs for Lebanese and Syrian workers so they could feed their families independently over the winter – and allowed farmers to move their produce and workers more easily without damaging their machinery. UNDP installed 500 solar-powered streetlights in the Akkar too, making transport – and communities – safer.

In 2015 a number of farmers, business owners and activists in north Lebanon learned how to export to EU markets, to open up new opportunities now that exports to Syria have decreased. The ILO trained over 140 small business owners and workers in export logistics, and 100 farmers learned how to export potatoes to the Netherlands, thanks to a joint effort between the ILO and the Dutch Embassy.
Looking ahead to 2016

It’s difficult to imagine the future, but we know that 2016 will be another year of facing tough realities. The challenges are greatest for people in the most vulnerable and deprived parts of the country, and so the lines between humanitarian assistance and development assistance are becoming more blurred. Despite the efforts of the UN family and many others, we sadly cannot expect a quick solution to the Syria conflict, so we know the impact for Lebanon will continue to be huge. The security environment will remain challenging, with threats posed by extremism and continuing regional divisions.

But, much like Lebanon, the UN is used to difficult conditions, and we are ready to face 2016 side-by-side with the Lebanese people. We believe we can, by working together, support Lebanon to maintain stability, and look after the people most in need here in 2016. The UN family will be guided in this work by the new Sustainable Development Goals, which Lebanon and the world adopted in 2015. We will particularly be focusing on Education, Women, Infrastructure, Institutions and Sustainability.

We have ambitious goals for 2016: through the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan, and with host of partners, we will be delivering essential aid to millions of people. Food assistance will target 1.1 million people; energy, water and waste disposal two million; education will, we hope, reach a further 550,000 children, protection 1.86 million, and shelter a further 800,000. In 2016, we want to reach 1.6 million people with health care support.

Lebanon is a strong example of resilience, despite the serious challenges and shocks it has faced. In 2016 we will continue to support the Lebanese authorities in reinforcing and extending Lebanon’s stability. UN agencies will continue to support the state in delivering for all its citizens: not only public services, but also a society where citizens’ voices can be heard and justice and accountability are strengthened.

Our ability to deliver these crucial programmes depends on securing funding. So we will be at the forefront of efforts to gather commitments from the international community to fund humanitarian assistance, stabilization and development. We also need to keep deepening the partnership between the UN, international community, and the Lebanese state. And we will continue to ask ourselves the most important question of all: “How can we do things better?” We hope our Lebanese friends and partners will keep helping us to answer.