



Statement of Lebanon

by

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**at the
Third Committee**

Item 68: “Promotion and Protection of the rights of children”

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Check Against Delivery

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Mr. Chairman,

As we start our discussions on the promotion and protection of the rights of children, we cannot but recall what Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon said at the opening of this 70th Session of the General Assembly:

"There is nothing we can say to the world's children that can convince them the world needs to be the way it is... we must do everything we can to close the gap between the world as it is, and the world as it should be".

Indeed, the world as it is, for millions of children around the world and particularly in our region seems sadly gloomy.

Just by the numbers, according to the latest reports of the specialized agencies, 59.9 million of people around the world are forcibly displaced, more than half of them under 18. 230 million children live in countries affected by armed conflicts.

In the Middle East and North Africa region alone, 21 million children and adolescents are either out of school or at risk of dropping out, while 8850 schools are out of use: totally destroyed, or used as shelters, or by parties to the conflicts, not to mention the lack of access to health services, sanitation, nutrition, let alone the access to safe shelters...

In the world as it is today children are the first victims of armed conflicts, extremism and terrorism, caught in struggles they have no say in and will not have a chance to change the course of their future if we do not urgently act all together to prevent them from becoming a lost generation.

It is time indeed to build the world as it should be, "a World fit for Children", as defined since the General Assembly's special session in 2002.

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals last month, with an international, all inclusive pledge to leave no one behind, offers a renewed opportunity in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

Lebanon remains committed to the promotion and protection of the rights of children, and despite all the challenges facing the country today, mainly the presence of over 1.2 million Syrian refugees, most of whom are women and children, Lebanon is pursuing its efforts in accordance with all relevant commitments.

A National Strategy has been put in place for the Protection of Children against all Forms of Violence. Lebanon is also working in close collaboration with the International Labor Organization for the implementation of a National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Labor, while education for all remains a priority for Lebanon.

Earlier this year, Lebanon joined more than 50 countries in endorsing the Safe School Declaration initiated at the Oslo Conference last May.

More recently, Lebanon with the support of UNHCR, UNICEF, the World Bank and bilateral donors, launched in September a nationwide “Back to School” campaign to maximize access to certified education for all children on the Lebanese territory. The campaign will allow 200,000 Syrian refugee children between the ages of 3 and 14 to access certified basic education, nearly double the number of children reached last year.

A total of 1,278 public schools will manage the increased number of students, while another 259 schools – 115 more schools than last year – will provide second shifts in the afternoon. Nevertheless, current resources are not sufficient to reach all the targeted refugee children. The same applies to all other services, and beyond to the Lebanese themselves as a result of the protracted refugee crisis on the Lebanese territory.

The humanitarian situation Lebanon is facing today, is outstretching its infrastructure at all levels, and puts years and decades of development efforts and achievements at stake.

Finally, Mr. Chairman,

As we embark on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, 11 of which are relevant to children's rights, Lebanon looks forward to another major event next May in Istanbul, the World Humanitarian Summit, to reshape aid with two priorities in mind: dignity for all and building resilience for hosting communities, especially in developing countries.

I thank you.