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REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON PROGRESS MADE IN THE COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAMME OF ASSISTANCE FOR LEBANON'S RECONSTRUCTION

SUMMARY

This document is presented in compliance with 180 EX/Decision 49. It summarizes progress achieved by UNESCO, since the 180th session of the Board, in providing assistance in favour of the reconstruction and development in Lebanon within the Organization's fields of competence.

Financial and administrative implications: none.

Action expected of the Executive Board: proposed decision in paragraph 24.

INTRODUCTION

1. This document is submitted in pursuance to 180 EX/Decision 49, inviting the Director-General to report at its 181st session “on all the progress made in devising and implementing the comprehensive programme of assistance for Lebanon’s reconstruction, as identified by the intersectoral mission and finalized in cooperation with the Lebanese authorities”. As reported in document 180 EX/49 Add., a high-level intersectoral mission, led by the Deputy Director-General, was dispatched to the country from 27 to 29 August 2008. The purpose of the mission was to: (a) Identify elements of a comprehensive UNESCO programme of assistance for Lebanon’s reconstruction taking into account national priorities within UNESCO’s fields of competence and major ongoing UNESCO assistance; (b) Explore the feasibility of a joint UNESCO/Lebanon mechanism for fund mobilization; and (c) Prepare the ground for subsequent technical missions to develop a fully-fledged programme of assistance and details of the mobilization mechanism for the above-mentioned joint UNESCO/Lebanon fund.

2. During the period under review, the UNESCO Beirut Office and programme sectors at Headquarters, through appropriate technical missions, engaged in further consultations with line ministries and national institutions concerned and prepared a fully-fledged **Programme of Assistance for Lebanon’s Reconstruction**. The Programme will be sent to the Office of the Prime Minister of Lebanon for review and final approval. A second high-level mission will subsequently be fielded to discuss the modalities for the establishment of the joint UNESCO/Lebanon mechanism for fund mobilization in order to secure necessary funding to start the implementation of the programme.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF ASSISTANCE FOR LEBANON’S RECONSTRUCTION

3. The Programme of Assistance for Lebanon’s Reconstruction builds upon the activities undertaken by UNESCO to meet early recovery needs following the cessation of hostilities in 2006, as well as current projects intended to support longer-term recovery and reconstruction. It aims to provide a comprehensive intersectoral programme which draws upon UNESCO’s technical expertise in its fields of competence and reinforces ongoing assistance in the process of reconstruction. More specifically, its main objective is to support the Lebanese authorities in promoting lasting recovery and peace by strengthening institutional capacities, fostering dialogue among communities, improving the quality and equity of service provision, and revitalizing key public and private sectors while promoting sustainable economic development – all of which can play a critical role in preventing future conflicts and in reducing the risks associated with natural disasters. The programme has been designed to contribute both to the achievement of the country’s strategic, long-term priorities, as well as to address the more immediate needs of the Lebanese people and national institutions through concrete, short-term actions and projects.

4. During the period of reporting, following intensive consultations with line ministries and national institutions concerned, including the Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO, the following major needs for reconstruction were identified:

- overcoming divisions and promoting social cohesion and development, as well as mainstreaming intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity into sustainable national policies, whether economic, social, cultural or educational;
- strengthening the capacities of relevant line ministries and key institutions to prepare for and respond to the challenges posed by conflict and disaster; and
- providing the population with quality public service in a number of priority areas, as well as equipping decision-makers with reliable data-gathering mechanisms to encourage research, development and innovation.

5. Based on the above, the programme has been developed around the following three overarching projects and their component sub-projects, drawing upon UNESCO's mandate and added value and its past experience and know-how in post-conflict situations:

- (1) Building Bridges across Diversity
- (2) Strengthening Lebanon's Capacity to Respond to Conflict and Disaster
- (3) Modernizing Key Public Sector Services

➤ **Building Bridges across Diversity**

6. This project is aimed at assisting the Lebanese authorities to strengthen the process of national reconciliation and social cohesion through fostering dialogue and promoting diversity as a positive resource in the following four areas identified in close consultation with line ministries concerned:

7. *Dialogue between adjacent but divided communities*: This project aims to provide guidance to the Lebanese authorities on how to prevent the exacerbation of inter-communal tensions and promote cultural diversity as a driving force for social cohesion and development. The project will target five pairs of adjoining, conflict-affected communities by creating Community Learning Centres dedicated to the promotion of dialogue, early conflict resolution and local community development and empowerment. Activities under this project will include: provision of extra-curricular modules to primary and secondary schools focused on mutual understanding and positive citizenship; training of community players in improving intra- and inter-community communication channels; promoting the role of women in community development; training of teachers on gender issues and conflict resolution; organizing non-formal educational activities to counter illiteracy; encouraging the active participation of youth in local governance and inter-communal dialogue.

8. *Dialogue among Lebanese university students*: This project will aim to develop opportunities for intercultural dialogue between 300 students from seven selected universities and empower youth to understand and promote the importance of cultural diversity, tolerance and dialogue irrespective of religious or political affiliation. Activities under this project will include: training in topics related to intercultural dialogue and national reconciliation; the creation of a website to promote cultural diversity and the production of theatre performances and short films on cultural heritage and rights.

9. *Learning to live together through education*: The main goal of this project will be to enhance national reconciliation through improving quality of citizenship education both in the curriculum and in teaching methodologies. This will entail the organization of teacher training on civic and citizenship education, developing teacher guides and training packs, piloting and organizing innovative modalities for extracurricular activities inside and outside the school environment, focusing on Learning to Live Together programmes.

10. *Strengthening media reporting standards*: This project will aim at enhancing professional and ethical standards in journalism so as to encourage independent and non-partisan reporting. Main activities will include: developing a code of conduct for media professionals; producing training material on ethical and professional reporting, conducting journalist training on new reporting standards and techniques.

➤ **Strengthening Lebanon's Capacity to Respond to Conflict and Disaster**

11. The goals of this project are to institutionalize and mainstream emergency planning, preparedness and response in the policies and procedures of relevant Lebanese line ministries and to build the capacity of ministries' core groups in these areas. It consists of four main sub-projects:

12. *Strengthening the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's (MEHE) capacity to plan, prepare for and respond to conflict and disaster:* This project intends to reinforce the capacity of educational planners, managers and head teachers to plan, manage and monitor education in emergencies while increasing the MEHE's involvement in United Nations mechanisms for the planning and implementation of future crises. This will entail creating a conflict and disaster response task force within the MoE, training MEHE officials on how to mainstream conflict and disaster preparedness into educational planning; training regional educational officers to enhance preparedness at regional and local levels; creating a coordination mechanism between central, regional and local authorities and other relevant partners (United Nations, NFGOs, etc.).

13. *School-based support programmes for children at risk: Our Right to Succeed:* This project will aim at reducing school dropout by putting in place preventive measures and educational opportunities for children at risk and by developing an action plan targeting causes of drop-outs and addressing gaps in the current education system.

14. *Conflict-sensitive reporting:* This project will aim at promoting conflict-sensitive journalism by providing media professionals with the necessary skills and techniques to report on conflict and disaster situations with objectivity and sensitivity. It will also raise awareness among national authorities, the media and general public on the importance of providing access to humanitarian information in disaster environments.

15. *Seismic risk mitigation in Lebanon:* This project will aim to reinforce the capacities of the National Centre for Geographic Research (NCGR) with seismic research and observation and evaluation and prevention of seismic risks.

➤ **Modernizing Key Public Sector Services**

16. This project intends to reinforce Lebanese public institutions and strengthen their capacity to deliver quality public service, while rebuilding trust in the public sector as a leader of economic development and national reconciliation. Sub-projects include:

17. *National News Agency:* This project aims at strengthening the National News Agency by upgrading the skills of its professional staff, enhancing its training programmes and reinforcing its capacity to disseminate unbiased and accurate information to the whole of the country.

18. *Télé-Liban:* The goal of this project is to support the national television Télé-Liban and enhance its programming quality with the aim of improving audience and ensuring reliability, objectivity and transparency. Part of enhancing programming quality is to strengthen programming which encourages national unity, rather than narrower community interests.

19. *Model school library:* This initiative is aimed at providing policy advice to assist the MEHE in developing strategies and guidelines, as well as training programmes benefiting librarians, teachers and school managers. This will involve the development of a model school library concept replicable in various regions of Lebanon, of training materials for school librarians and teachers on teacher-librarianship curriculum, resource-based teaching and learning, cataloguing, library managing, reading promotion activities, etc.

20. *Underwater Archaeological Centre in Tyre:* The aim of this project is to strengthen the Centre for Underwater Archaeological research in Tyre, under the authority of the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities (DGA) of the Ministry of Culture, through provision of some needed equipment and training of qualified archaeological research and heritage management staff, specialized in underwater and marine archaeology.

21. *Lebanese Observatory of Research, Development and Innovation:* The main goal of this initiative is to support the National Scientific Research Council (CNRS) in setting up an Observatory of Research, Development and Innovation (LORDI). LORDI will be in charge of

producing reliable statistics on resources (input) and production (output) in science and technology; maintaining an inventory of the main R&D resources and skills in both the academic and business sectors; and conducting analyses of the R&D system in Lebanon as requested by concerned institutions.

22. *Mediterranean Scientific Research Centre*: This project aims to assist the Lebanese Government in establishing a pilot Mediterranean Scientific Centre, entrusted with coordinating and implementing cooperation projects addressing the scientific research needs and concerns of Mediterranean countries. Main activities within this project will include: a conference of interested Euro-Mediterranean and Lebanese research officials to develop a detailed concept for the projected Centre; developing a work plan for the Centre; setting up and training a core team of Lebanese researchers identified to work in the projected Centre; assisting the Lebanese authorities in identifying, rehabilitating and equipping premises allocated for the Centre.

23. *Boosting the book sector in Lebanon: Supporting creativity and growth*: This initiative intends to improve the production, distribution and export capacity of the book and publishing sector by launching a mapping exercise aimed at identifying gaps and opportunities and collecting information on the value chain. This in turn would facilitate the development of well-informed public policies and enhance the dynamism of the creative sector which has great potential for development in Lebanon.

Action expected of the Executive Board

24. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 180 EX/Decision 49,
2. Having examined document 181 EX/48,
3. Welcomes the development of the reinforced programme of assistance to Lebanon, finalized in cooperation with the Lebanese authorities;
4. Invites the Director-General to report to it when appropriate as part of his general report under item 5 "Report of the Director-General on the follow-up to decisions and resolutions adopted by the Executive Board and the General Conference at their previous sessions".