

## *Joint Press Communiqué*

### **The Prime Minister of Lebanon and the UN Deputy Secretary-General launch a Crisis Response Plan for Lebanon**

*Beirut, 15 December 2014-* The Lebanese Prime Minister, Tamam Salam, and the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Jan Eliasson, launched today at the Grand Serail, the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan. The plan outlines the priorities of the Government and the international community for the coming two years to respond to the crisis in country.

During his second visit to Lebanon since the start of the Syrian Crisis, the UN Deputy Secretary-General reiterated the commitment of the United Nations to support the Lebanese people and Government to respond to the vital needs generated by the flight of over one million people into the country.

As the year ends, 1.2 million Syrians are registered as refugees with UNHCR in Lebanon with many more present but unregistered. Four out of five are women and children. Most have difficulties meeting their minimum survival needs through their own household expenditures. These join 270,000 Palestine refugees who were already in country and an estimated 330,000 Lebanese living in poverty. In total, over 2 million people in country – most of them concentrated in the poorest communities - are now vulnerable to the worst effects of poverty: homelessness, illness and malnutrition, and negative coping strategies such as child labor or child marriage. Youth are the worst affected.

Four years into the crisis, the communities that have so generously welcomed the refugees are reaching a critical point. Public services are overwhelmed, economic growth has faltered and unemployment is rising at record rates. As social tensions grow, Lebanon is deeply concerned to protect its fragile stability. “The Lebanese people have opened their homes to our brothers and sisters fleeing the conflict in Syria. They have shared their land, their schools, their food and their water. But now their own needs for work and services also need to be met if we are to avoid a crisis in country”, said the Prime Minister of Lebanon Tamam Salam.

The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan launched today aims to address these problems. Jointly elaborated between the Government of Lebanon and the United Nations, the plan aims to ensure that the response to the Syria

crisis tangibly benefits Lebanon and helps to stabilize the country during this difficult period. It continues the necessary work of delivering protection and humanitarian assistance to families displaced from Syria, while expanding plans to invest in Lebanese services, economies and institutions in the poorest and at-risk areas. With funding requirements estimated at 2.1 billion USD, the plan hopes to reach up to 2.9 million people most in need; half of which are Lebanese.

“The Lebanese people and its institutions have been the first respondents and the largest donors to this crisis. Their most vulnerable should not, however, pay a disproportionate price for another country’s conflict” said Jan Eliasson, Deputy Secretary-General. “I call on the international community to increase their solidarity with the Lebanese people. The crisis in Lebanon is not just their problem. It should also be ours. Failing to invest in Lebanon’s resilience could have tragic consequences for vulnerable Lebanese, Syrians and Palestinians alike,” underlined the Deputy Secretary-General.