

Joint Statement of the International Support Group for Lebanon

Beirut, 23 January 2020

Following the announcement of the formation of the new government, the International Support Group for Lebanon (ISG) urges the new Government to swiftly adopt a ministerial statement with the necessary substantial, credible and comprehensive policy package of measures and reforms that can address the demands of the Lebanese people. Their timely and decisive implementation will be essential to stopping and reversing the deepening crises facing the country and its citizens.

Recalling the ISG statement of 11 December 2019 which laid out a way forward on immediate and longer-term reforms in line with Lebanon's prior commitments, the ISG encourages the new Government to move forward with such reforms that are needed in order to halt the deteriorating economic situation, restore fiscal balance and financial stability and address long-standing structural deficiencies in the Lebanese economy. Lebanon's economy and its population, in the absence of reform, remain reliant on external funding and are vulnerable to increased hardships.

The ISG encourages the Lebanese authorities to take the necessary decisive actions to restore stability and sustainability of the funding model of the financial sector, including by immediately adopting a reliable 2020 budget, implementing the electricity reform plan, reforming state-owned enterprises and passing and implementing effective procurement laws.

In response to the demands of the Lebanese people and the needs to restore investor confidence in the economy, the authorities are further urged to tackle corruption and tax evasion, including through adoption and implementation of its anti-corruption national strategy, the anti-corruption agency law, judicial independence reform and other measures to instill transparency, accountability and strengthen good governance.

The ISG reaffirms the need for internal stability and the right to peaceful protest to be protected.

The ISG reiterates its strong support for Lebanon and its people, for its stability, security, territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1701 (2006), 1680 (2006), 1559 (2004),

2433 (2018), 2485 (2019) as well as other relevant Security Council resolutions and statements of the President of the Security Council on the situation in Lebanon.

The ISG calls upon all Lebanese parties to implement a tangible policy of disassociation from any external conflicts, as an important priority, as spelled out in previous declarations, in particular the 2012 Baabda Declaration. They recall the importance of implementing relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and previous commitments which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon so that there will be no weapons or authority in Lebanon other than those of the Lebanese State. The ISG recalls that the Lebanese Armed Forces are the only legitimate armed forces of Lebanon, as enshrined in the Lebanese constitution and in the Taif Agreement.

The ISG reaffirms its willingness to support a Lebanon committed to reforms in the implementation of a comprehensive set of actions. The above measures once implemented will start to rebuild confidence in the economy among the Lebanese and the international community and help facilitate sustained international support.

The ISG calls on the international community, including international organizations, to ensure continued support for Lebanon in addressing the security, economic, and humanitarian challenges facing the country.

Note to Editors

The International Support Group has brought together the United Nations and the governments of China, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, together with the European Union and the Arab League. It was launched in September 2013 by the UN Secretary-General with former President Michel Sleiman to help mobilize support and assistance for Lebanon's stability, sovereignty and state institutions and to specifically encourage assistance for the Lebanese Army, Syrian refugees in Lebanon and host communities and government programs and public services impacted by the Syrian crisis.