
PRESS RELEASE

UN-Habitat equips vulnerable urban communities in Lebanon with first communal handwashing stations in the fight against COVID-19

Beirut, 14 July 2020. UN-Habitat Lebanon has designed, produced and implemented the first communal handwashing stations in Lebanon. Implemented in four vulnerable urban neighbourhoods in Beirut (Sabra and Daouk Ghawash) and Mount Lebanon (Maraach and Nabaah in Bourj Hammoud), beneficiaries include vulnerable Lebanese, refugees and migrants in poor urban neighbourhoods. The handwashing stations will provide water and hygiene services to almost 30,000 host and refugee populations, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and other similar health risks.

The specific objective of this handwashing station is to equip vulnerable communities with communal water and sanitation facilities, while shedding light on the importance of handwashing as a critical preventative measure against COVID-19. It also aims to raise awareness on the importance of sound hygiene practices especially in vulnerable urban settings in Lebanon.

“Awareness, water and proper sanitation are the first line of defence against the spread of COVID-19. Through the provision of communal handwashing stations and awareness raising, this project aims to reduce COVID-19 risks and exposure, targeting vulnerable Lebanese, refugees and migrants, residing in specific urban areas in Lebanon,” said Taina Christiansen, Head of UN-Habitat Country Programme in Lebanon.

Public spaces in vulnerable neighbourhoods in Beirut and Mount Lebanon were selected to host 22 handwashing stations. This was achieved in close collaboration with direct caretakers which are Municipality of Beirut, Municipality of Bourj Hammoud, and the Popular Aid for Relief and Development (PARD), a local NGO in Beirut.

“This is a very important initiative by UN-Habitat, at a time where the city of Beirut has reactivated measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, especially in the most vulnerable areas. We will cooperate with the municipality to ensure that the people are safe and comfortable” said Marwan Abboud, Governor of Beirut.

Therefore, for the first time in Lebanon, handwashing stations will be installed in the streets, sidewalks, or vacant municipal spaces, next to public facilities (educational, religious), municipalities, municipal gardens, making handwashing available and accessible to all, especially the marginalized community groups, leaving no one behind. See mapped locations in the attached factsheet.

“This initiative adds to the efforts of the municipality, which organized awareness campaigns since the beginning of the pandemic, monitored the implementation of the general mobilization provisions and conducted sterilization campaigns in public places and community centres,” said Mardig Boghossian, Mayor

of Bourj Hammoud. “We thank UN-Habitat and offer our gratitude for their efforts, as we hope to develop the collaboration between us,” Mayor Boghossian concluded.

As part of the wider United Nations supported Government of Lebanon COVID-19 response, UN-Habitat is rolling out a series of COVID-19 projects in some of the most vulnerable urban neighbourhoods in Lebanon to help communities mitigate the effects of the pandemic and the ongoing socio-economic crisis.

About the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

UN-Habitat works in over 90 countries supporting people in cities and human settlements for a better urban future. Working with governments and local partners, its high impact projects combine world-class expertise and local knowledge to deliver timely and targeted solutions. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a dedicated Goal on cities, SDG 11 – to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

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