
PRESS RELEASE

UN-Habitat Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif advocates for holistic urban recovery for the cities of Beirut and across Lebanon during her first official visit to the nation

Beirut, 16 June 2021. United Nations Under-Secretary-General and UN-Habitat Executive Director, Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif completed her first official visit to Lebanon from 10 to 16 June 2021. During her visit, Ms. Sharif toured projects implemented by UN-Habitat in Lebanon, including those conducted and underway in response to the Beirut Port explosion.

Throughout her visit, she interacted with partners and donors supporting these efforts. Her visit aimed to promote and advocate for the necessity of factoring urban dynamics into crisis response and recovery efforts, particularly in support of the people of Lebanon, during these unprecedented times. A tangible evidence-base for the holistic reconstruction of Lebanon's capital city, is the Beirut City Profile which was launched during Ms. Sharif's visit.

"The need to continue to mobilize the international community to maintain its support and engagement to help Lebanon is paramount. Not only to ensure that the heart of Lebanon is restored, but to assist the people – Lebanese, refugees, and migrant communities – across the country, to overcome the harsh multiple and ongoing crises," said Ms. Sharif.

During her meetings with Government officials, Ms. Sharif emphasized the importance of immediate and scaled up support to reinforce the capacities of local institutions and authorities in Lebanon – because of their front-line role in responding to the needs of the people. She further urged national and local urban development stakeholders, to place adequate and affordable housing at the centre of current and future recovery efforts across Lebanon. The already dire housing situation in the country has been further impacted because of the multiple crises in the country. This has left thousands – including Lebanese, migrant and refugee communities – at heightened risk of eviction, and even more at risk of downgrading their already sub-standard living conditions.

"The UN-Habitat Executive Director's visit to Lebanon follows a visit she made to Iraq. As the two countries are facing complex challenges, there are some similarities that can be adopted in terms of response and recovery of the two nations – ensuring that efforts within each of these countries address their peoples' respective needs" said Dr. Erfan Ali, UN-Habitat Regional Representative for Arab States

To help provide an evidence-base for the recovery of Beirut, Ms. Sharif launched UN-Habitat's Beirut City Profile that offers a cross sectoral analysis across the urban realm of Lebanon's capital city, including major challenges. It also sets forth holistic, people-centred recommendations on the way forward, through immediate, medium, and long-term solutions towards a green, inclusive resilient recovery of the city – at city, neighbourhood, and national level.

"UN-Habitat remains ready to support the Lebanese people and local authorities technically and operationally, in implementing future reforms that have an urban bearing. While concurrently continuing to

support local authorities and communities across Lebanon through targeted urban interventions such as our work in rehabilitating the National HIV and TB Centre damaged by the Beirut Port explosion and our multisectoral urban upgrading project in Mina, Tripoli that we inaugurated during the visit of Ms. Sharif” said Ms. Taina Christiansen, Head of UN-Habitat Lebanon Country Programme.

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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