

Press Release

The United Nations, Member States in Lebanon and civil society organisations come together to celebrate women leading the fight against environmental degradation and climate change in Lebanon

Beirut, Lebanon

Tuesday, March 8, 2022 – International Women’s Day (United Nations - Gender Working Group) – Today on March 8, International Women’s Day, the United Nations celebrates the contribution of women and girls around the world, who are leading the charge on climate change adaptation, mitigation, and response, to build a more sustainable future for all. We are not only celebrating their efforts to alleviate the severe and lasting impacts of climate change on our environmental, economic, and social development, but also their integral role in sustaining viable communities.

To recognize International Women’s Day, the United Nations System in Lebanon, coordinated by UN Women, and in collaboration with the Lebanon Gender Working Group (GWG) and with the support from UN Members States come together around a joint campaign “*Women and girls leading the fight against climate change to build a more sustainable future for Lebanon*”. The campaign builds on the global theme, “[Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow](#)” that is aligned with the priority theme for the upcoming 66th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW66, 14-25 March 2022) on “achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls in the context of climate change, environmental disaster risk reduction policies, and programmes”.

[Climate change is a threat multiplier in Lebanon](#). Over the past decades, an inability to find sustainable solutions for key environmental threats, including those related to waste management and sustainable energy, has produced serious public health impacts. Contamination and depletion of the groundwater have reached catastrophic levels, and air pollution is estimated to have increased by 50% between 2017 and 2020 in Lebanon.

By profiling a group of women living and working in Lebanon to combat the far-reaching impacts of climate change, including its health, economic and social effects on the country, the UN and partners are celebrating the achievements of women in the country, while highlighting the urgent need for action on matters related to climate change and environmental degradation. The group of nine

women being profiled: Nadida Raad, Caroline Chabtini, Dr Maya Nehmeh, Aida Ghadban, Dr Myriam Ghsoub, Carole Ayat, Dr Mona Fawaz, Nouhad Awwad and Dr Najat Saliba, are leading innovative actions for climate adaptation across the country. In trying to mitigate the effects of this environmental challenge, these women are working to build a future of equality, rights, and opportunities for all.

“The nine women profiled in this year’s campaign provide solid and tangible proof of women’s leadership in all aspects of life. We need women in politics, in the economy, and in the environment to ensure Lebanon’s swift and smooth recovery. These women inspire us and remind us that change is possible, that solutions are possible, and that knowledge can serve our common goal to avoid the country’s ecological collapse,” said the United Nations Deputy Special Coordinator, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, Najat Rochdi. “Climate change in Lebanon poses a threat multiplier to Lebanon’s stiff challenges that will intensify the current predicaments. This requires resolute action and serious engagement by all of us, including the government and the people, to fight environmental degradation and climate change in Lebanon, she added.

The campaign includes a photographic virtual exhibition showcasing women champions leading on climate change initiatives across Lebanon. The photographic virtual exhibition will run online and will be included, as a permanent feature, on UN Lebanon and [UN Women Lebanon’s website](#). The exhibition will be complemented by an online launching event, hosted today. In parallel, a social media campaign will run, from 8 to 15 March on the social platforms of the UN agencies in Lebanon

“We need all hands-on deck to fight climate change and environmental degradation. I am inspired to see the leadership and innovation of women in Lebanon in promoting solutions for a more sustainable tomorrow. Lebanon truly needs to unlock the potential of all its talented women and girls!” said Merete Juhl, Ambassador of Denmark.

“For me the extraordinary women profiled in the campaign, underlines the necessity to connect the dots between a sustainable future, gender equality, social inclusion and quality education. We will be unable to reach a sustainable future if we continue to exclude the potential of half of the population while searching for solutions. This is even more important considering the unfolding education crisis in Lebanon, which hampers yet another generation of girls from fulfilling their full potential”, said. Ambassador of Finland Tarja Fernández.

Ryme Assaad, President of [Sustain the World](#), a Lebanese organization working on climate justice and a member of the Lebanon Gender Working Group. She says, on behalf of the GWG “Despite restricted rights, limited access to political decision-making, financial resources and employment opportunities, women and girls in Lebanon are proving to be leaders of change, driving and inspiring the change they want to see in their communities.

The first National Woman’s Day was observed in the United States on February 28, 1909. In 1975, during International Women’s Year, the United Nations began celebrating International Women’s Day on March 8, which is now celebrated in many countries worldwide. It is a day when

women are recognized for their achievements regardless of divisions, be those national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic, or political.

About the United Nations

The United Nations system in Lebanon comprises 23 agencies, funds and programmes, a peacekeeping mission, a political mission, and a regional commission covering a broad spectrum of peacekeeping, political, development, human rights, and humanitarian work in Lebanon. The United Nations supports Lebanon to promote the country's long-term peace and security, development, and human rights priorities.

About the Gender Working Group (GWG) in Lebanon

Chaired by UN Women, the Gender Working Group is a strategic forum and advocacy platform to promote gender equality and the integration of gender considerations in humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) actions of the United Nations and their partners in Lebanon. The GWG regularly convenes both international and national actors from across sectors to facilitate action on gender equality and women's rights. The Gender Working Group is made up of 42 members (UN agencies: 19, INGOs: 6, and NGOs: 17); 15 member states collaborate with the group in an observatory status capacity. This group is complementary to the Gender Donor Working Group, chaired by the Government of Canada in Lebanon.

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