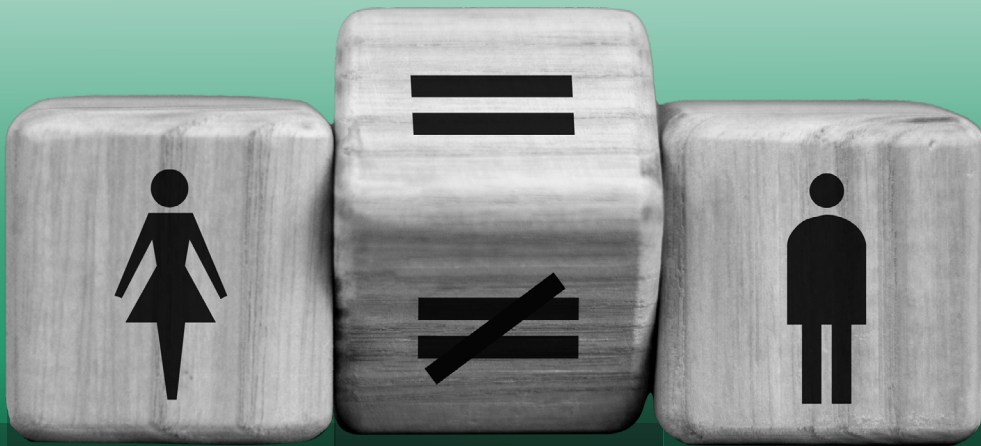


الهيئة الوطنيّة
لشؤون المرأة اللبنانيّة
National Commission
for Lebanese Women



National Strategy for Women in Lebanon

2022-2030



National Strategy for Women in Lebanon

2022-2030

الهيئة الوطنية
لشؤون المرأة اللبنانية
National Commission
for Lebanese Women



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صندوق الأمم المتحدة للسكان



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the
Netherlands

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- **Preamble** 9

- **Background and Methodology** 10

- **Vision** 12

- **Introduction** 13

- **Main Objectives** 14

 - **First Main Objective:** 14

Violence against women and girls is socially rejected and legally prohibited, and protection and assistance to survivors are available in terms of security, judicial interventions, as well as materially and psychologically, while psychological rehabilitation is available to the perpetrators.

 - **Second Main Objective:** 22

Women are capable and empowered on personal, educational, economic, and social levels.

 - **Third Main Objective:** 34

Women occupy leadership positions in political, administrative, economic, security, and defense institutions, and participate in drawing up development reforms and implementing them at the national and local levels.

 - **Fourth Main Objective:** 40

The principle of equality between women and men is adopted in-laws, legislations, policies, and administrations, and is in force in the security, judicial, and administrative agencies. Its implementation is monitored by specialized agencies and mechanisms.

 - **Fifth Main Objective:** 46

The prevailing culture is based on the principles of human rights for men and women, while the means and outlets for its dissemination are aware of their responsibilities.

- **Outline of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2022-2030** 50

Annexes: 64

Annex No. 1: 64

List of participants in the Strategy consultation meetings

Annex No. 2: 68

Sources and references

The adoption of the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2022 - 2030 is like an act of faith in the future, despite the difficult circumstances we are facing. The Strategy that you have in your hands is the result of a joint decision by the National Commission for Lebanese Women and its partners not to give up and submit to frustration, and to be determined to confront the difficulties that hinder the achievement of social progress. When this Strategy was being developed, the population of Lebanon was going through the toughest living, health, development, and economic conditions. This situation was decisive in determining the priorities set forth in the Strategy, but this did not prevent its authors from having a vision for the future based on the principles and values upon which Lebanon was founded more than a hundred years ago.

These are the same values and principles that today allow its sons and daughters to excel at the global level in all scientific and technical fields. These principles and values are mainly based on non-discrimination in rights, equal opportunities between male and female citizens, and respect for human rights and the rules of good governance. The vision for the future, from which the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon draws its goals, is also based on the lessons learned from historical experiences which show clearly that development cannot occur without women's participation and empowerment, and for it to be sustainable, there must be commitment from the part of both women and men. This commitment means that both men and women should be active in their society.

With the speed at which movement and exchange of opinions and information are taking place today, there is no longer any use for societies to hold on to outdated attitudes in relations between women and men under the pretext of "protecting" themselves from the dangers of disintegration and loss of cultural identity. Societal tensions in general and the emergence of internal conflicts usually increase with the spread of rights violations, the fragile economic conditions and standards of living, the restriction of personal freedom, and the gap between the frameworks of social rules in force and the lived reality. These are challenges that the policies called for by this Strategy aim to avoid, through seeking to make all the rights enjoyed by men available to women as well, and through making all social roles available to women, including leadership decision-

making roles and the identification of policy options. The participation of male and female citizens in contemporary societies in directing and influencing policies is what ensures cohesion within these societies.

Hence the important for women, just like men, to acquire the ability to participate in and influence these policies. This ability is what sustains cohesion in society and protects it against the risks of vulnerability and disintegration. Today, societies need to empower women to be, just like men, active in their surroundings, in their communities, and in their countries.

To ensure gender equality in terms of rights as well as in terms of the ability to move our societies forward, legislations that are still discriminatory to women's rights in Lebanon should be reformed. Policies should also be made responsive to the principle of gender equality and institutions should be pushed to implement this principle.

This Strategy seeks to achieve dynamic gender equality, providing women and men with equal opportunities in directing their life paths, their personal lives, and the choices of the society in which they live. This means that the law regulating public order must guarantee these rights, and must be protected by institutions that do not allow for it to be ignored. The general vision of the Lebanese State, from which the main objectives of this Strategy were drawn, is the establishment of a safe State that is politically and economically stable, a State of law and institutions that abide by the international charters and treaties it has ratified, and a State that nurtures a cohesive society that sanctifies human dignity, preserves and protects human rights, and safeguards natural environment.

Finally, a State that enjoys peace, in which all sectarian, ethnic, and social groups are integrated, and in which male and female citizens are equal in rights and duties, in access to available opportunities, and in directing policies.

We hope that these will be the attributes of our State by 2030.

Claudine Aoun

President of the National Commission for Lebanese Women

Previous Strategies

The Law No. 720/1998 establishing the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) included, as part of the executive tasks it assigns to NCLW, “Drawing proposals of national strategies for the advancement of women; and developing and amending strategies in effect whenever need be.”

Before the law establishing NCLW was issued, the National Committee for the Follow-up on Women’s Issues and the National Committee in charge of monitoring implementation of resolutions signed at the Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing had issued in 1996 a first strategy for Lebanese women in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). This strategy had set objectives and foreseen measures in nine areas dealing with legislation, policies, economics, social field, education, health, environment, media, and women’s issues under Israeli occupation.

In 2011, NCLW issued the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021, developed in collaboration with its partners in the public and private sectors and in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). On 12 June 2012, the Lebanese government gave its preliminary approval for this Strategy, which was completed by two action plans for its implementation, the first for 2013 to 2016, and the second for 2017 to 2019. Moreover, NCLW, in cooperation with UNFPA, issued four reports on the implementation of the Strategy by the relevant partners, and also recently issued a comprehensive evaluation study on its work. This evaluation study highlighted the main obstacles that have been preventing the achievement of gender equality. These obstacles are related to the negative discrimination against

women that still prevails in some of the laws. They are also related to the culture prevalent in society and to the political, economic, and social reality, the complexity of which has been exacerbated by the Syrian displacement.

In 2017, the Office of the Minister of State for Women’s Affairs (OMSWA) developed the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2017-2030, which was based on the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2011-2021, redefining the areas of work to suit the strategic goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Nonetheless, this Strategy remained unofficially ratified.

The Process of Developing the National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2022-2030.

As soon as the implementation period of the 2011-2021 Strategy ended, NCLW began developing a succeeding Strategy for women that takes into account the developments that the country has witnessed during the last five years, mainly, at the political and economic levels, the large-scale protests in which women had a pioneer role, the outbreak of Covid-19, the Beirut port explosion, and the depreciation of the Lebanese currency, which almost plunged a large portion of the Lebanese population into the cycle of poverty. Moreover, the development of this Strategy was part of the effort to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It also followed the Lebanese government’s adoption in September 2019 of a National Plan to implement Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security. The Strategy was also developed after the issuance of concluding remarks by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) following its discussion of

the sixth official report submitted by Lebanon on the implementation of the CEDAW provisions.

NCLW began preparing for the development of the Strategy by communicating with its partners in the public and private sectors in order to identify the priority topics of the Strategy. As a second step, a preliminary outline of the Strategy was drawn up, based on the recommendations contained in the observations of the CEDAW Committee and on the interventions foreseen in the National Plan for the implementation of Resolution 1325.

The Strategy outline was additionally based on the conclusions reached by the reports issued on the implementation of the previous Strategy and the evaluation study of its implementation. It was also based on the statistical data available, in particular those published in 2021 by the Central Administration of Statistics and the United Nations Development Programme, entitled “The Life of Women and Men in Lebanon: A Statistical Portrait,” as well as on the results of the study issued by the Central Administration of Statistics and the International Labour Organization on the labor force in Lebanon (2022).

After the NCLW General Assembly endorsed this outline, NCLW, along with its partners, organized ten sectoral sessions to discuss the main topics covered by the outline. Representatives of 150 ministries, institutions and organizations from the governmental, public, civil society, private sectors and international community organizations participated in these sessions, which were held between October 4 and November 18, 2022. The President of NCLW as well as representatives of the NCLW relevant committees also participated in these sessions.

The sessions covered the ten headlines contained in the preliminary outline of the Strategy, and are as follows:

- Combating violence against women and girls.
- Participation in political affairs, national dialogues, conflict resolution, mediation, and decision-making at the national level.
- Women in economy and care services.
- Participation in decision-making at the local level and in development and environmental initiatives.
- Participation in the security and defense sectors.
- Health care services for women of all ages.
- Educational empowerment and the elimination of digital illiteracy.
- Cultural environment supportive of women’s affairs and enhancing their roles in society.
- Recognition of the rights of women to full citizenship, access to justice, and the adoption of the necessary legislative and procedural reforms.
- Enhancing the institutional structures for women’s affairs.

At the beginning of each session, the President of NCLW introduced the topic of discussion, after which NCLW presented the current situation and the topics to be included in the Strategy were discussed.

NCLW then drew the main objectives of the Strategy from the general discussions that took place during these sectoral meetings, drawing a vision of women in Lebanon in 2030.

Women in Lebanon play leadership roles in all fields, and are equal to men in rights and obligations in a State where the rule of law prevails and where human rights are protected.

Based on this vision, the parties involved in developing this Strategy met to work on identifying the obstacles that women in Lebanon face to achieve their rights on the one hand, and to advance the country again on the other. In Lebanon in the 2020s, the greatest societal challenge is to get out of the economic distress and paralysis that has afflicted the national economy, public finance, and most of the State institutions. In such circumstances, it was clear from the meetings that paved the way for the development of this Strategy, that women, just like men, are aware and cognizant of the necessity of unifying all potential to avoid further deterioration in living conditions, and that it is necessary to seriously explore ways to modernize patterns of thinking and practices in all fields so that women enjoy abilities and access to opportunities to contribute to reviving institutions and revitalizing public life.

As ensuring the security and safety of people is the primary duty of the State and the first demand of individuals, both men and women, the first objective identified by the Strategy dealt with the issue of violence against women and girls, which, even though is prohibited and punishable by law, is still ignored at times, and even justified by some, or at least in specific instances. It is obvious that we talk in vain about “empowering” women when they are still at risk of exposure to violence. Freeing women and protecting them from fear is the primary condition for achieving their empowerment. Women’s “empowerment”, in every sense of the word, also depends on their liberation from destitution and humiliation caused by poverty. In order to achieve the vision of women in leadership positions in Lebanon in various fields, we must work to develop the factors of accumulation of their human capital, i.e., make them enjoy comprehensive health care, modern high-quality education, and the ability to establish their economic autonomy.

In addition to these factors, and given that women assuming leadership positions is still a new feature in our society, developing women’s confidence in their own abilities to lead and developing positive policies require encouraging women to take on leadership roles.

This certainly requires further development and sometimes change in the rules regulating the relationships that are woven in society between women and men, and which are translated in societies into laws and public procedures as well as through popular cultural patterns regarding the

position of women and men and their respective roles in society.

Defining the main objectives of this Strategy is based on this logical framework for working towards reaching the adopted vision. The sub-objectives and areas of intervention in each of them were determined based on the general discussions that preceded the drafting of this Strategy, through which it was decided to limit the implementation period of the Strategy to eight years, up until 2030, so that this period is consistent with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its slogan of “leaving no one behind” in the development process. This means that the areas of work in this Strategy shall include women of all age and social groups, such as girls, elderly women, women with disabilities, poor women, displaced women, women refugees, and others.

The National Strategy for Women in Lebanon 2022-2030 makes sure to reaffirm the following:

:: This Strategy intersects with the development strategies and plans adopted in Lebanon, which are related to all sectors.

:: This Strategy is based on human rights principles and the principles adopted in the Constitution of the Lebanese Republic and in international declarations, charters, and agreements related to the implementation of human rights for women.

:: Implementing this Strategy requires the active participation of men and youth, along with women and girls.

:: Achieving the results that this Strategy aspires to achieve requires extensive cooperation and coordination among all stakeholders in the public, private, and civil society sectors.

As a follow-up to this work, NCLW plans to develop a First Action Plan to implement this Strategy, covering the years 2024 to 2026. Pursuant to the coordination tasks entrusted to it by the law of its establishment, NCLW will cooperate with its partners within the scope of the areas of intervention identified in this Strategy.

First Main Objective:

Violence against women and girls is socially rejected and legally prohibited, and protection and assistance to survivors are available in terms of security, judicial interventions, as well as materially and psychologically, while psychological rehabilitation is available to the perpetrators.

Violence against women and girls is socially rejected and legally prohibited, and protection and assistance to survivors are available in terms of security, judicial interventions, as well as materially and psychologically, while psychological rehabilitation is available to the perpetrators.

Liberating women from fear and making them feel safe is what this objective means, as women should not be subjected to discrimination that makes them inferior to men and thus makes them exposed to violence simply because they are women.

Violence against women is connected to the rights that are recognized for them by societies, as this violence is often based on legislative or cultural rationale that make it acceptable in some societies while denied or suppressed in others.

Women's movements in Lebanon paid their primary attention to women obtaining their civil rights, and violence against women was particularly highlighted through denouncing murders in which the perpetrator could have escaped punishment if the victim was a woman, and if the criminal used "honor" to justify his crime. The National Strategy for Lebanese Women, adopted in 1996 by the National Committee for the Follow-up on Women's Issues and the National Committee in charge of monitoring implementation of resolutions signed at the Fourth International Conference on Women in Beijing, in cooperation with UNIFEM, addressed the goal of "abolishing violence practiced against women and girls in all its forms" within action in the "social field."

Today, the approach we use in Lebanon to address violence against women (VAW) has evolved. It has lifted, albeit partially and in an uneven way between Lebanese regions and between population groups, the secrecy that used to cover the occurrence of VAW cases. This was essentially permitted by the issuance of Law No. 293 in 2014, on "Protecting Women and Other Family Members from Domestic Violence" and the launch of Hotline 1745 by General Directorate of Internal Security Forces to report any case of VAW to the security forces. Today, violence against women and girls is approached from a human rights angle, and combating it means seeking to learn the circumstances surrounding it, the level of its acceptance or condemnation by society, the effectiveness of applying legal penalties in deterring its occurrence, the patterns of dealing with VAW cases in police stations and at court, and the availability of support for victims according to their needs and age groups.

Consequently, the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs developed the "National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women and Girls in Lebanon 2019-2029" and drew up a first implementation plan for it for 2019-2022. The Lebanese government also adopted in September 2019 the National Plan for 2019-2022 (extended to 2023) for the implementation of the 2000 UNSC Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, with strategic objectives such as "prevention of and protection of women and girls from gender-based violence." The Strategy for Combating Violence against Women and Girls has adopted the term Violence Against Women (VAW) which means,

according to the 1993 United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

Based on the experience of those active in dealing with issues of violence against women and girls, this Strategy chose to adopt the definition approved by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) on Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings, which notes that gender-based violence is “Any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person’s will, and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. It includes acts that inflict physical, mental or sexual harm or suffering, threats of such acts, coercion and other forms of deprivation of liberty. These acts can take place in public or in private life.”

According to this definition, gender-based violence includes domestic violence, namely economic, psychological, emotional, physical, and sexual violence, as well as physical assault, including harassment and rape, forced and child marriage, online violence or cyber extortion, human trafficking, and forced prostitution.

In order to achieve the main objective of combating violence against women and girls, this Strategy referred to the conclusions of the NCLW/UNFPA 2021 report on the process of implementing the

National Strategy Action Plan to Combat Violence against Women and Girls 2019 – 2029.

Areas of intervention were divided into three sub-objectives, as follows:

First sub-objective: Expanding knowledge about the data surrounding the occurrence of cases of violence and the incidence of violence against women and girls.

Second sub-objective: Adopting intensive initiatives to prevent the spread of violence against women and girls and to protect them.

Third sub-objective: Ensuring access to justice and providing support to victims.

First sub-objective: Expanding knowledge about the data surrounding the occurrence of cases of violence and the incidence of violence against women and girls.

The knowledge sought under this objective aims to promote combating violence against women and girls, and it assumes that the parties receiving complaints about violence enumerate these complaints and collect information about their occurrence. The numbers published today about incidents of violence against women and girls are the numbers of complaints received by the ISF General Directorate. A database must be developed in order to determine the actual frequency of these incidents. Civil society organizations, which VAW victims often resort to, must also cooperate with the security forces to create a picture as close to reality as possible regarding the incidences of violence against women and to learn the direct and indirect reasons for the occurrence of such violence.

Enhancing knowledge requires, in addition to collecting information, monitoring and analyzing its development, as well as monitoring and analyzing the evolution of society's view of violence against women and girls, which often reflects the prevailing culture. The cultural field is an essential area for interventions aiming at preventing the spread of violence against women and girls, as prevention lies at the core of combating violence to which women and girls are exposed. In addition to imposing punishment, legislations should also deter from and discourage the use of violence. Providing measures to guarantee victims' access to justice also helps deter acts of violence.

Likewise, society's rejection of violence is also influenced by the way victims are treated in police stations and in the courts, as well as by the ways provided to them to enable them to overcome difficulties and live in dignity. This rejection is evident through the general recognition that the practice of violence against women or girls, especially when it occurs in the family sphere, is a sign of defect in the perpetrator's psychological balance and should therefore be treated psychologically.

Areas of Intervention.

First: Mainstreaming the gender equality approach at the sectoral level, and adopting the approach based on screening cases of violence when providing medical, legal, security, social, and educational services... through diagnostic forms/files with the aim of monitoring these cases.

Second: Developing a cooperation and coordination mechanism between the competent security agencies, competent official departments, civil

society organizations, and medical centers that provide support to victims, in order to determine the incidence of violence against women and identify all significant relevant data, including: the social characteristics of the surrounding environment and the personal characteristics of the perpetrator of violence.

Third: Institutionalizing periodic analysis of the data available through the Lebanon National Gender Observatory, and publishing its results.

Fourth: Institutionalizing the analysis of periodic opinion polls and studies issued on society's view regarding violence against women and girls, and publishing their results.

Fifth: Creating joint mechanisms between the public and civil society sectors to formulate policies based on data analysis to combat violence, and to ensure and monitor their implementation.

Second sub-objective: Adopting intensive initiatives to prevent the spread of violence against women and girls and to protect them.

This objective addresses initiatives that will prevent and reduce the incidence of violence against women and girls. These initiatives, which the policy aiming to combat the spread of violence should revolve around, should be based on data extracted from the results of statistical, prospective, and analytical studies.

The first of these initiatives relates to the existence of deterrent legal penalties that discourage the potential perpetrator of violence from carrying out his act, and to the availability of safe and effective executive procedures for law enforcement which

are publicly recognizable, especially among women from vulnerable groups (poor, refugees, foreign workers...) as well as among men.

In this context, this Strategy calls for the strict enforcement of deterrent legal penalties and for expanded definition of the concept of violence against women and girls, so that the laws prohibiting the practice of this violence include harmful acts committed against the will of women, including marital rape, child marriage, and sexual harassment (including cases of harassment in the workplace), to which women and girls are exposed, and other practices that constitute a violation of the dignity of women and girls.

Strict application of laws and procedures prohibiting the practice of violence against women, expanding the scope of policies that punish it, and spreading knowledge about it, aim at strengthening confidence among abused women in the protection provided to them by the law and by security and judicial agencies, and subsequently encouraging them to report cases of violence to which they are subjected. The outcomes of studies on the spread of violence against women and girls in Lebanon indicate that merely a few of the acts of violence are reported to the security authorities, with a large discrepancy in reporting rates among social groups and regions. In general, working to change the cultural approach that weakens women's position in society and tends to justify their exposure to violence constitutes the cornerstone of policies aimed at preventing acts of violence against women and girls.

Work in this context includes enhancing the prevailing stereotypes about women that present

them as inferior to men in terms of ability to make decisions, bear responsibility, and carry out duties, thus portraying men as superior to women and therefore enjoying natural authority over them. Influencing the positions resulting from the prevailing cultural environment requires working on several levels, including in particular direct and indirect ways to influence public opinion, the approach adopted in home and school education, the content of school and university curricula, and the patterns of interaction between women and men in social life in its various aspects.

The success of working to replace the negative stereotypes of women with positive ones requires working in parallel to transform the prevailing images of masculinity into images characterized by positive attitudes in the appreciation they have for women, their dignity, and their status in the family and in society. In order to successfully prevent acts of violence against women and girls, it is also necessary to diversify the methods adopted according to the targeted group of women, with special attention to girls, elderly women, disabled women, women refugees, female foreign domestic workers, female prisoners, and victims of human trafficking.

Areas of Intervention:

First: Legislation:

Topics:

- Expanding the definition of violence against women and girls in laws to include every abusive act committed by the perpetrator against the will of the victim.
- Adopting a civil law setting the minimum age for

marriage at 18 years.

- Toughening penalties for crimes of violence against women.

- Implementing in a strict manner the penalties imposed by judicial rulings in cases of violence against women, such as making them not subject to reduction for mitigating reasons, and excluding them from any amnesty laws.

- Providing greater protection for women and their children in the provisions of the Law of the Protection from Domestic Violence.

- Providing opportunities for perpetrators of violence against women to undergo rehabilitation courses in specialized centers.

- Implementing the mechanisms stipulated in Law 293/2014, such as establishing courts that are competent in terms of cases of violence.

- Creating the special account at the Ministry of Social Affairs, as foreseen by the Law, to assist the domestic violence victims.

- Toughening the penalty for violence if the victim is a child and/or a woman with special needs or an elderly woman, depending on the characteristics of the perpetrator.

Second: Adopting mechanisms for reporting, following up, and punishing cases of sexual harassment in public administrations, municipalities, private institutions, and public places.

Third: Disseminating knowledge among women and men about the provisions of laws punishing the perpetration of violence against women and girls, and the reporting and protection mechanisms, through mainstream media and social media, education in schools and universities, trade unions, professional groups, health and social service centers, and municipalities, with special attention paid to providing awareness programs for population groups with a vulnerable social situation.

Fourth: Spreading the culture of gender equality by seeking to highlight the qualities of ability, responsibility, and success in women, and by promoting images of masculinity that support gender equality through mainstream media and social media, and by involving men (meetings with clerics and decision makers...).

Fifth: Adapting the methods adopted to prevent violence according to the target groups:

- **For girls:** Spreading awareness among them about their rights and the dangers of early marriage, cyber extortion, and sexual harassment, as well as about ways to seek help within the framework of schools and the services available through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the security services.

- **For elderly women:** by providing support to families with elderly persons and by monitoring the work of elderly care institutions according to the standards in force, and providing support to them.

- **Female children and women with disabilities:** by providing them with the necessary protection and

services, and ensuring that the services provided to victims of violence are inclusive.

- **Women displaced and refugees:** by working to create an anti-violence environment within the groups to which they belong.
- **For foreign domestic workers:** by improving the working conditions in employment contracts, abandoning the conditions of what is known as the “sponsorship system or kafala”, expanding the scope of the Labor Law to include the domestic service sector, and activating the Ministry of Labor’s oversight over working conditions.
- **For female prisoners:** by guaranteeing their rights and their human dignity, by providing the necessary protection and services.
- **Victims of human trafficking:** by ensuring that they are able to file complaints and providing them with legal assistance and interpretation services, and by building the capacity of members of the security and judicial services to identify women and girls who are victims of trafficking.
- **Women living with HIV.**

Third sub-objective: Ensuring access to justice and providing support to victims.

To achieve this objective, procedures for reporting a case of violence and filing a complaint against the perpetrator should be facilitated, a unified referral system should be adopted, recipients of complaints at police stations should be trained on how to deal with the victim, police stations should be well-

equipped, and municipal police officers should be empowered to intervene in cases of violence against women and girls. This objective also requires that all parties dealing with violence issues should have unified perceptions and be trained on using the right expressions in the reports or referrals they develop.

At the judicial level, judicial processes in cases of violence are facilitated by establishing courts specialized in examining cases of violence, as adopting the principle of specialization contributes to accelerating the trial period and to deciding requests related to domestic violence quickly.

Victims of violence are also encouraged by the availability of specialized and free legal aid services when cases of violence against women and girls are raised before the civil courts as well as before the religious and spiritual courts competent in personal status cases. It is also necessary to take into account considerations specific to the psychological state of the victim in the procedures adopted to collect evidence in cases of violence. Women and girls who are victims of violence, like other victims of any assault, have the right to obtain health, psychological and legal services and financial compensation, in addition to psychological and economic support and safe shelters where they can seek refuge with their children. They also need to be able to acquire skills that would allow them to earn a living. Women and girls who are victims of violence need monetary assistance, especially in the extremely difficult living conditions prevailing, which exacerbate the risks of women and girls being exposed to various types of economic violence.

Just as knowledge of the law punishing violence

against women is necessary to enhance the victim's confidence in the protection of the security services, it is also necessary that the public be informed about how and where a woman or girl exposed to violence from any party can seek and obtain help, and receive health, legal or economic services or a place of accommodation.

To facilitate this, it is necessary to rehabilitate the development service centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs to provide services to women and girls victims of violence and guide them in order to obtain their rights. In this context, it is necessary to activate the implementation of the law by creating a special account with the Ministry of Social Affairs to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment, ensure care for them, and rehabilitate those who commit crimes against them.

Areas of Intervention:

First: Facilitating procedures for reporting a crime and filing a judicial complaint, adopting a unified referral system, developing a special system to enable victims to access justice even during crises, and applying approved standard operating procedures.

Second: Enabling municipal police officers to coordinate in cases of violence against women and girls with the Internal Security Forces, equipping police stations and training their officers to receive victims.

Third: Adopting unified concepts and expressions for all those dealing with all issues of violence, according to what is contained in the NCLW/ UNFPA "Gender-Based Violence Lexicon" (2021).

Fourth: Establishing special competent courts to hear cases of violence against women and girls.

Fifth: Providing specialized services for legal aid in cases of violence against women and girls raised before the civil courts and before religious and spiritual courts competent for cases related to personal status.

Sixth: Incorporating considerations specific to women into the procedures adopted for evidence collection, especially in cases that require the expertise of a forensic doctor.

Seventh: Developing health, psychological, and judicial services as well as monetary aid for women and girls who are victims of violence, to be made available at centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and enabling women and girls to earn a living and overcome difficulties.

Eighth: Increasing the number of shelter centers and safe spaces for victims of violence against women and girls, applying quality standards in their work, and making them qualified to receive abused women with their children and to receive abused women with disabilities.

Ninth: Disseminating knowledge about services available to victims of violence and ways to obtain them.

Tenth: Implementing the law on the establishment of a special account with the Ministry of Social Affairs to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment.

Second Main Objective:

Women are capable and empowered on personal, educational, economic, and social levels.

Women are capable and empowered on personal, educational, economic, and social levels.

By adopting this objective, this Strategy expresses the aspiration to provide opportunities for women to activate the potential they possess.

What is paradoxical in Lebanon is that while the educational levels among women and men are almost similar, women who have remunerated work barely represent a quarter of the workforce, and the health crisis and economic crisis have caused their numbers to diminish even further.

This situation is explained by a variety of reasons, including socio-cultural reasons such as the prevailing stereotype that limits women's roles to family and domestic chores, and others economic in nature, such as the inadequacy of academic qualifications of women wishing to access the labor market, as well as other reasons. However, the most prominent reason according to opinion polls in this regard is the need to take care of children. The economic crisis has additionally increased the risk factors that hinder women from taking initiatives in establishing independent businesses.

The crisis also exacerbated the living conditions and has led to the expansion of poverty, which now affects the vast majority of the population. To get out of poverty, there should be more ways to provide social protection and empower women with the ability to confront difficulties by taking initiatives that provide them with opportunities to earn a living and enable them to achieve economic autonomy. The actual economic empowerment of

women can be achieved when they get the right to manage resources and income, and the conditions to benefit from them in order to enhance their living conditions, and when they have the will to bring about this development. For this to be achieved, there should be conditions needed for the development of human capital elements, such as health, skills, knowledge, and the ability to face fluctuations in living conditions. Therefore, the areas of work aimed at successfully empowering women personally, academically, and economically are divided into three sub-objectives:

First sub-objective: Developing means of social protection for women.

Second sub-objective: Developing factors for human capital accumulation among women.

Third sub-objective: Enabling women to achieve economic independence.

First sub-objective: Developing means of social protection for women.

Women are generally more exposed than men to situations of poverty due to the unfairness they experience in terms of enjoying full rights and benefiting from livelihoods, which explains the high percentage of poor households among those that are women-headed. Therefore, these households should receive priority again in terms of assistance, especially within the framework of government programs that provide for the provision of social safety nets.

With the widespread incidence of poverty in Lebanon, which according to the latest reports

affects about 80% of the population, of whom 20% suffer from extreme poverty, it has become a vital matter to create networks through which the necessary assistance can be provided to overcome crises, and subsequently providing social protection that allows women to face the difficulties of life. Therefore, aid must first be secured, and mechanisms must be found to ensure its proper delivery to women, especially in vulnerable communities. It is therefore necessary to expand the scope of work of the centers affiliated with the ministries concerned with development affairs and distributed throughout the Lebanese regions, so that they can constitute a kind of vehicle to meet the needs of the population, especially to assist women. Public schools must also play a role in contributing to efforts of combating poverty by providing meals for students, especially in the elementary classes. As with all multi-party activities, activities aimed at combating poverty require coordination among aid and service providers.

For this purpose, municipal councils in all regions are called upon to carry out this task, and are also called upon to coordinate with governmental organizations that are active in their geographical scope. Municipal councils may also cooperate in this field with the private sector, especially with economic institutions operating within their local jurisdiction, to involve them in efforts to provide assistance to groups in need. Of course, for municipalities to carry out these coordination tasks with service centers and with private sector institutions, there should be transparent working

mechanisms that rely on automation and leave no room for suspicion of any act of corruption. Moreover, the groups targeted by the aid operations must be aware of them, and it is therefore necessary to announce their availability and the conditions for obtaining them through the most widespread media outlets, including digital platforms.

In the coming years, social protection policy in Lebanon should not be limited to seeking to meet urgent needs, as economic recovery requires an integrated social protection system that would provide women as well as men with the conditions for living in dignity.

Hence, achieving this objective requires working on a range of topics divided into two areas of intervention: combating poverty and developing an integrated social protection system that would benefit both women and men:

Areas of Intervention

First area: Combating the spread of poverty among women:

- Giving priority to women-headed households in government programs aimed at combating poverty.
- Expanding the scope of work of the centers affiliated with the ministries concerned with development affairs in order to provide assistance and services to the population, especially to women, including primary health care for pregnant women, preventive medicine, mental, sexual and reproductive health services, and menstrual hygiene supplies.
- Providing meals in public schools for students in the elementary classes.

- Municipal councils play a coordinative role between all entities that provide aid and services within their geographical scope; these councils establish cooperative relations with private sector institutions to involve them in providing aid, while adopting transparent work mechanisms.
- Disseminating the announcement of available aid and the conditions for obtaining it on a large scale, especially through digital platforms.

Second area: Developing an integrated social protection system that benefits women on an equal basis with men and specifically ensures:

- Developing the work of the optional health insurance program at the National Social Security Fund (NSSF).
- Expanding the NSSF contributions to include workers in the formal and informal sectors, as well as male and female workers to whom the Labor Law does not apply, especially female agricultural workers and domestic workers.
- Unifying the insurance institutions system and unifying allowances for all workers.
- Adopting an old-age social security system.
- Adopting an optional system that allows male and female retirees to receive a pension salary instead of end-of-service compensation.
- Equality between insured fathers and mothers in obtaining family allowances without the need for a waiver on the part of the insured father, so that children can benefit from health allowances of the insured wife.
- Removing any provision in the Labor Law that directly or indirectly discriminates between women

and men.

- Adopting paid, non-transferable paternity leaves, provided that the State and insurers cover these leaves.
- Developing policies that are sensitive and favorable to gender equality at the core of economic and social planning in Lebanon, and working on the implementation of these policies by public and private sector institutions.
- Establishing a social protection and support system for child care, a nursery system that helps parents continue working.

Second sub-objective: Developing factors for human capital accumulation among women.

One of the most serious repercussions of the economic crisis on society in Lebanon is the decline in the availability of health services and in the level of educational attainment for young women and men. Lebanon has historically been distinguished by the quality of health services available and the high competencies of its human resources. However, this advantage is at risk nowadays as a result of livelihood difficulties, and with it the attempts to diminish the gap in the human capital index between girls and boys, as per the World Bank's indicators.

There is a global consensus that in order to achieve gender equality, the huge gender discrepancies in human resources should be eliminated. It has become well-known that efforts to provide quality conditions for women's health and education are essential factors for the development of human capital. Studies have shown that improving health

and educational conditions for women has a positive impact on their families, on the health of their children, and on their educational attainment in the future. Hence, this Strategy will seek to achieve this goal by working in the areas of health care for women of all age groups and women educational empowerment as well as women digital literacy.

Areas of Intervention

First area: Providing health care for women of all age groups.

On February 1, 2023, the Ministry of Public Health launched the “National Health Strategy - Vision 2030” with the aim of establishing a health system that ensures everyone’s access to quality health care centered around the needs of individuals. This Strategy was adopted at a time when the economic crisis was growing, and its focus was on the need to reform the health financing system.

The orientations identified by the Ministry of Public Health’s Strategy for the coming years include ensuring service packages to achieve comprehensive health coverage, expanding the scope of the primary health care network, promoting health and prevention of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), implementing programs targeting NCDs, implementing the National Nutrition Strategy, and developing and retaining the health workforce. It should be noted that these orientations intersect with the following axes of the National Strategy for Women:

Topics:

First: The Ministry of Public Health cooperates with the relevant ministries, departments, and municipalities to ensure food safety, clean drinking water, safe drinking water distribution networks, and awareness of the conditions for maintaining health standards in lifestyle, and rules of healthy food.

Second: Raising the level of services provided by dispensaries and developing the services provided by primary health care centers for women by developing their equipment, developing their staff and their capabilities so that health services are available and easily accessible, especially in the areas of:

- Promoting reproductive and sexual health rights and services within an integrated package from a life cycle approach.
- Psychiatric services for women and girls of different age groups and ways to prevent psychological illnesses.
- Preventive medicine, including methods for early detection of breast and cervical cancer, and ways to prevent heart disease, obesity risks, and others.
- Upgrading the referral system from preventive care to specialized services, specifically for critical and serious cases.

Third: Announcing through the media and through municipalities, especially among women from vulnerable social groups, about the services available in primary health centers.

Fourth: The official school curriculum includes

educational materials that address reproductive and sexual health, mental health, first aid, health prevention, and healthy lifestyle patterns.

Fifth: Providing health services in public schools, including mental health.

Sixth: Spreading knowledge through mainstream media and social media about the rules of healthy living patterns.

Seventh: Activating the role of the centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and supporting them in implementing comprehensive health and social awareness programs.

Second area: Empowering women educationally, scientifically and technically, and advancing digital literacy.

One of the negative repercussions of the economic crisis is that it pushes household heads to make wrong decisions regarding the future of their children, boys or girls, such as taking them out of school and pushing boys into the labor market - to provide the family with additional income, no matter how small - or forcibly marrying girls at an early age for the purpose of reduced household expenditure. In recent years, an increase in school dropout rates for boys and a growth in early marriages for girls in some rural areas have been observed in Lebanon. Hence, it has become necessary, now more than ever, to revive the law on compulsory education by issuing application decrees

and expanding its scope to include additional educational stages. Combating school dropout also requires spreading awareness again and again about the essential role of educational achievement in improving social status. One of the means to fight dropout is the creation of special classes to help low-performing students, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and the Ministry of Social Affairs (MOSA).

It is also necessary to educate students about the danger of dropping out of school, even under the pretext of working or getting married before the age of 18. Therefore, it is necessary for schools to provide psychological support for students to help them overcome their educational difficulties and personal crises. They must also be aware of the services available to them at the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, which puts at their disposal a Hotline No. 01772000 for any assistance in case they are exposed to any form of violence or harassment at school, at home, or elsewhere.

The school can also protect students from the risks they might be exposed to while using the Internet and social media platforms, by making them aware of the dangers of cyber extortion and informing them of the existence of a Hotline No. 01293293 provided by the security forces to report such incidents.

The school also has a central role in educating generations on accepting others who are different. Therefore, the number of inclusive schools that

accept the registration of children with disabilities should be increased. Schools also have an essential role in spreading the culture of gender equality and in breaking the limitations contained in traditional stereotypes of women that hinder them from realizing their potential. These are values that the male or female student imbibes through educational materials as well as through the teaching method. It is important that these values are transmitted by teachers of both genders. Hence the need to encourage young males to join the educational body, which in Lebanon has become overwhelmingly composed of women. In education, more than any other profession, working requires constantly being aware of developments in educational materials and teaching methods. Therefore, teachers need to attend capacity development courses and receive the needed motivation to do so.

Regarding educational materials, there is a definite need for all students, especially female students, to undertake digital literacy, starting from an early age. The use of computers and the Internet has become absolutely necessary in studies, at work, and even in daily life activities. Therefore, schools need to be provided with necessary equipment which should be ensured maintenance services, power for operating it; and teachers should be prepared to use them and train students on using them.

At the level of educational materials as well, and with the aim of educating male and female students about health prevention methods, it is necessary to spread knowledge about the dangers of consuming drugs and substances that are harmful to health, and it is also necessary to include lessons on natural

sciences with materials related to reproductive health, which contributes to a better understanding on the part of the students, both male and female, of reproductive functions and sexual relations, and helps them get rid of the erroneous ideas commonly circulated in society about everything related to gender and the superiority of males over females. In order to empower girls in particular, the school must allow them to practice sports, which helps them develop self-confidence and qualifies them after the end of school education to choose work in non-traditional fields that require engaging in physical fitness, such as professions related to sports or to the security and defense forces. This is in addition to the positive impact of physical exercise on health.

Due to the scientific and technological progress observed during the last decades in all areas, new professional fields have opened up, especially in the fields of power generation, alternative energy, telecommunications, digitization, e-commerce, and others. The common denominator of all job opportunities offered by these fields is that they require qualifications in science, technology, and mathematics, and these are sectors to which women in Lebanon slightly contribute. The first reason for this is that relevant university and technical education does not attract many women, as female students often tend to study literature and humanities as well as education science and medical care. The choice made by female students is often linked to the stereotypical perception of the jobs that women should occupy, and is also a result of ignorance of the advantages of working in

these modern fields. Hence, if schools encourage female students to choose academic or professional study or a work field in science and technology and their applications, this would help girls enter a new professional world and open new horizons for them in science and work endeavours. Finally, empowering women scientifically requires support to the efforts of MEHE and the educational institutions to be offered by the municipalities - in terms of helping to secure the transportation of students and teachers and organizing awareness sessions on educational affairs, for example - and by the civil society organizations - especially with regard to training male and female teachers on the use of modern technologies and digital literacy among female and male students.

Hence, we conclude that the topics of this area of intervention are as follows:

Topics:

First: Combating school dropout and child marriage through:

- Activating the compulsory education law and expanding its scope.
- Raising awareness about the importance of academic achievement.
- Creating special classes to help low-performing students.
- Organizing awareness campaigns targeting female and male students.
- Providing psychological support by specialists for male and female students.

Second: Providing protection for male and female

students from the risk of exposure to violence through:

- Introducing students to the protection services provided by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the possibility of calling a Hotline to request assistance.
- Introducing students to the risks of cyber extortion, the means of seeking help, and the existence of a Hotline to report in the event of incidents.

Third: Integrating the inclusion of men and women with special needs in the educational system.

Fourth: Developing and modifying educational curricula, incorporating the vision of gender equality into the textbooks, and training and sensitizing the educational staff.

Fifth: - Spreading a culture of acceptance of others and a culture of gender equality through:

- Increasing the number of inclusive schools.
- Reviewing the images conveyed by textbooks about women.
- Adopting the values of equality in the educational method.
- Encouraging young males to engage in the educational body.

Sixth: - Including educational materials that aim to:

- Advance digital literacy.
- Raise awareness about health prevention and reproductive health methods and provide spaces to practice sports for girls in particular.

Seventh: Encouraging female students to direct their academic or technical studies or in their field of work to the scope of science and technology and its applications.

Eighth: Creating networks that support the efforts

undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and educational institutions through coordination between the Ministry, municipal councils, and civil society organizations.

Third sub-objective: Enabling women to achieve economic independence.

Women's economic independence is fundamental to enabling them to direct their own lives and carry out their social roles. This objective addresses the issue of liberating women from economic dependency and enabling them to perform economic functions and benefit from the same opportunities as those available to men in the economic sphere. In today's world, it has become clear that the economic empowerment of women, leading to achieving their economic independence, not only benefits the development of their personal capabilities, but is also a basic condition for the development of society as a whole. In Lebanon, getting out of the economic crisis requires women's active participation in efforts aimed at reviving the country again.

Therefore, it is necessary to address the factors that hinder this participation, and it is necessary to take the initiative to promote the factors that encourage it. Such factors include those related to personal qualifications and competencies, including those related to the existing family and socio-economic conditions. Therefore, initiatives aimed at achieving this objective are of two kinds: the ones aiming to develop women's personal capabilities to enable them to carry out economic roles, and the ones aimed at making the socio-economic environment

and legal systems favorable to women's participation in the economic field. Moreover, this objective also intersects with the goals adopted by the "Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF)," whose implementation is being coordinated by NCLW upon an initiative by the World Bank International Finance Corporation (IFC), to enhance the supportive environment for women's participation in the economy and to improve women's ability to access economic opportunities.

Areas of Intervention:

First area: Developing the personal capabilities of women in the economic field.

Developing women's personal capabilities in this field means developing capabilities that increase the chances of access to the labor market, as well as developing the capabilities of women who wish to establish a private business or work as freelancers. For women participating in the labor market in Lebanon, a few fields seem to attract most of them, namely education, health, public administration, and services.

Unemployment also seems to affect women more than men, and a high percentage of women work in the agricultural sector where they carry out activities that are not included in the scope of formal work and do not fall within the scope of the Labor Law and the Social Security Law. As the economic crisis is continuing, the scope of informal work has been expanding, accounting for, at least half of male and female workers according to recent estimates.

As for areas of private business, women in Lebanon only own an insignificant percentage of small and medium enterprises, in full or in part, knowing that this type of enterprises provides jobs for more than half of the workforce. Even before the intensification of the economic and financial crisis, women business owners had access only to a small percentage of bank loans. Therefore, we must encourage women to take the initiative to improve their conditions, and we must also work to increase the opportunities available to them to develop their abilities to obtain a job, work as self-employed, or set up an enterprise.

In all three cases, women who want to work must have digital qualifications to be able to use modern technology. They must also be knowledgeable of the rules of business management, resource management, sales and marketing techniques, and the legal rules regulating business, especially if they want to be self-employed or establish a business. Women who wish to engage in economic activity must also be informed of the job opportunities available in new economic fields or through innovative work techniques. Hence, the following topics fall within this field

Topics:

- Intensifying and institutionalizing the efforts made within both public and private sectors as well as by civil society organizations to eradicate digital illiteracy among women, especially in rural areas.
- Encouraging private enterprises to provide training courses to develop women's administrative, productive, and commercial capabilities in the fields

of craft, industrial, and agricultural production and in the service sector in urban and rural areas.

- Organizing special training courses for women who wish to be self-employed or wish to establish a business, on the procedures that should be followed, on the rules of business management, resource management, sales techniques, and e-commerce, and focusing on making such courses available in rural areas, while encouraging the municipalities in these areas to provide them to local women.
- Spreading knowledge and awareness among women about the rules of the Labor Law and the Social Security Law in terms of their rights and duties at work as well as social protection.
- Spreading knowledge, especially through schools, universities and youth clubs, about the fields of work available to women in new economic fields (such as investing in alternative energy or in what is known as the green economy and the blue economy) or in using innovative technological means and providing training courses to secure qualifications to work in these fields.
- Spreading knowledge and awareness among women and girls about their economic rights included in personal status laws and civil laws related to inheritance, marital status, and cases of separation and divorce.

Second area: Creating family and socio-economic conditions favorable to women's work in the economic field.

One of the most prominent reasons women give for not engaging in economic activity is that they have to devote their time to provide family and household

services and care for children and the elderly. They also mention as another reason that discourages them from working, the lack of compatibility between their educational attainment and the qualifications required in the few jobs offered, which often require scientific and technological qualifications. Also, in many cases, women's failure to enter the labor market is associated with circumstances surrounding work and its conditions. For those who are considering being self-employed or starting their own business, the first obstacle is the difficulty of obtaining funding. Lack of experience also constitutes an obstacle to marketing their products.

Therefore, it is necessary to work on changing attitudes with regard to sharing domestic chores and family care work between spouses, so that the man bears part of the burden of domestic and family duties. It is also necessary to develop the services available for child nursery and care in the public and private sectors, and develop these services so that they meet quality standards and are available in all localities at reasonable cost.

We must also highlight the need for permanent coordination between the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, Economy, Youth and Sports, and Labor, in order to spread knowledge of the available job opportunities and the qualifications required for them. It is also necessary to provide a vocational guidance service in schools in order to help students make good choices in their career or university studies, and to encourage girls to choose

scientific and technological academic specializations that are often demanded in the labor market.

As for improving the conditions surrounding work and the working conditions, women pay special attention to safe means of transportation and conditions that guarantee decent work and preserve the dignity of female workers. In this context, the implementation of the law criminalizing sexual harassment issued in December 2020 will help provide a positive atmosphere at work for women and remove the fear of some that they might face disturbing situations resulting from sexual harassment attempts.

Moreover, undertaking legal reforms would eliminate the gender wage gap that still exists. The Labor Law includes articles that extend the period of maternity leave, allow for breastfeeding periods, and adopt flexible working hours, which would encourage young mothers to enter the field of employment. In addition, taking measures to facilitate procedures for establishing SMEs and providing credit facilities to women entrepreneurs would encourage women to take the initiative to launch their own businesses.

Hence, the work topics within this field are the following:

Topics:

- Working to develop the Labor Law, amend what is known as the sponsorship system, and review it with the aim of abolishing it.
- Adopting gender-responsive budgets, with expenditure that takes into account women's needs

and priorities, and tax collection systems that are sensitive to women's reality, which would contribute to including measures that stimulate increased women's participation in the labor market.

- Reforming the current tax structure to address inequalities.
- Having access to credit, including grants and zero-interest loans with favorable terms for guarantees.
- Providing educational opportunities for women, increasing social investment in the formal education system and reforming employment conditions in formal education.
- Recognizing women's unpaid care work and investing in the care economy.
- Expanding the coverage of the National Social Security Fund, establishing an unemployment fund, and developing training programs for the unemployed.
- Working to implement the policy of gender equality in the employment procedures adopted in the public and private sectors, and ensuring that there is no discrimination against pregnant women.
- Alleviating the domestic and family burdens that women bear by seeking to change attitudes, and promoting sharing household chores and family care between men and women and by developing care services for young children in nurseries and developing care services for the elderly by providing day care homes for them.
- Ensuring coordination between the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, Youth and Sports, Economy, and Labor, with the aim of disseminating knowledge of available job opportunities and the qualifications required for them, and creating

university and vocational guidance services in schools.

- Encouraging female students to pursue scientific and technological majors in their university and career choices.
- Improving the conditions surrounding work and improving its conditions by encouraging institutions in the public and private sectors to provide safe means of transportation for workers in urban and rural areas and to adopt provisions in the internal regulations of private enterprises (to be approved by the Ministry of Labor) and in the regulations in force in the public institutions and administrations that would ensure the implementation of the law criminalizing sexual harassment, protect the victim, and punish the perpetrator.
- Adopting legal reforms that guarantee gender pay equality, extend maternity leave, allocate time for breastfeeding, and allow for flexible working hours.
- Encouraging women to take economic initiatives through establishing businesses, by facilitating procedures for the creation of startups and SMEs and by providing credit facilities to women entrepreneurs.
- Working to find solutions to facilitate women's land inheritance and ownership of real estate, which helps them obtain loans to invest in economic projects.
- Adapting training courses targeting women who wish to establish businesses and increasing the number of business incubators.

Third Main Objective:

Women occupy leadership positions in political, administrative, economic, security, and defense institutions, and participate in drawing up development reforms and implementing them at the national and local levels.

Women occupy leadership positions in political, administrative, economic, security, and defense institutions, and participate in drawing up development reforms and implementing them at the national and local levels.

One of the many paradoxes observed in society in Lebanon is the prominent presence of Lebanese women in the fields of social, cultural, and professional life while being quasi absent at leadership levels in the fields of politics, public administration, and economics, as well as in trade unions and political parties.

They still have very little presence in Parliament, in municipal councils, and in ministries, and their participation in corporate boards is almost symbolic. However, Lebanese women's voting participation is almost equal to men's in parliamentary and municipal elections, and there are as many women as men in public office positions other than the first category.

This can be explained by many factors, including the influence of cultural legacies that assign men to leadership roles in public affairs and society, and limit women's roles to family tasks and artistic and humanitarian action that do not entail any exercise of power. Power, according to patriarchal culture that is still prevalent in our society, should be the monopoly of men. Furthermore, women's exclusion from leadership positions is also explained by their general lack of the skills required to carry out leadership tasks, due to the values they receive in their upbringing and which are promoted in culture in general, which consider that "feminine" qualities are in contradiction with the requirements for "leadership."

This perception of "feminine" qualities has, throughout history, prevented women from entering professions in which they excel today, such as

medicine, law, engineering, and the judiciary, and was particularly behind their refusal to hold security and military careers. Moreover, in our society, the issue of preserving reputation still concerns women more than men, and for this reason women fear more than men being subjected to hostile campaigns by competitors, especially that this has become easier and less ethically restricted thanks to social media. At the political level, in societies where individuals do not enjoy well-being and where the "rule of law" is absent, the individuals who aspire to leadership positions are expected to establish clientelistic relationships with their supporters, i.e., to provide them, in exchange for their support, with services to facilitate their business legally, and sometimes even illegally.

For women, establishing such relationships is difficult for many reasons, including that, in general, they do not have sufficient financial resources to provide these services nor do they have wide networks of relationships based on the exchange of interests with influential people in political and financial circles.

Relationships based on clientelism and nepotism also explain the limited access of women to leadership positions in public administrations and ministerial positions. The nature of political relations is also reflected on relations within the political party, which explains the failure of the Lebanese parties to support the access of women members to leadership positions, on the one hand, and the small number of cases in which the party nominates partisan women for administrative positions or parliamentary seats, on the other hand.

As for the limited presence of women in the trade union leadership, even in trade unions where women represent the majority of members, due to the multiple tasks required of women at work, in family care and in housekeeping, they find it

difficult, especially those who are not well-off to add the burden of trade union responsibilities to those they already bear at work and in the household. The problem of women's participation in the leadership of their community takes on an additional dimension in light of the successive life-threatening crises faced by Lebanon. Today, changing the way of dealing with public affairs is not just a demand aimed at improving the decision-making mechanism, it is rather a necessity in view of stopping the escalation of crises. As proven by experiences in history, the rapid deterioration in political, administrative, and financial institutions can only be stopped with reform of the practices that prevent the establishment of the rule of law and good governance. Ensuring the application of the law helps limit the spread of corruption and clientelism in political life, and thus increases the opportunities available for women to participate in leadership in the political field.

Therefore, today, the search for greater participation of women in political work goes in parallel with the development of practices in political life that make them more compliant with the rules of good governance. Thereby, women must participate effectively in completing the process of developing the rules of the political game in Lebanon, at the national and local levels.

Hence, achieving the goal of women's participation in community leadership requires that they acquire personal qualifications that enable them to overcome the mental obstacles that curb their ambitions, on the one hand, and allow them, on the other hand, to obtain the competencies that enable them to aspire to assuming leadership positions. Achieving this goal also requires necessary reforms at the legislative and administrative levels.

First sub-objective: Providing opportunities for women to acquire the personal qualifications and competencies required for leadership. This goal aims to develop self-confidence among

women so that they are encouraged to take initiatives and decisions on their own to be able, firstly, to direct their life paths, and secondly, to gain the ability to deal with others, especially their male colleagues, in cooperation at work and in participating in decision-making in public affairs. The qualities required for leadership are, foremost, personal qualities related to one's view of oneself and to dealing with others, and are second of all, qualities of the competence to complete the tasks required in the areas of work.

While the qualities of technical or professional competence are acquired through education, training, accumulation of experience, and continuous lifelong acquisition of skills, the readiness to develop personal leadership qualities is established during childhood. The development of these qualities is influenced by family and school education. These qualities include self-confidence, critical thinking, understanding of the meanings of autonomy, and being aware of one's rights. Within the traditional patterns adopted in society, boys usually acquire these qualities automatically from family upbringing, while their acquisition by girls varies depending on social groups. Therefore, this gap must be filled by incorporating the development of these qualities into school programs for girls, and the values on which they are based must be transferred to families through the activities of parent committees in schools.

The personal leadership qualities that should be developed since childhood and adolescence include the ability to persuade through logical argumentation and the art of mediation and conflict resolution. These are qualities that are beneficial for girls as well as boys, and therefore it would be useful to incorporate them into school and university programmes.

As for the technical competencies that are supposed to be available for leadership tasks in any field,

they should be made available to women, especially young women, in specialized institutes and universities, and through educational and training courses in all regions. In this area, municipalities must play a pivotal role in organizing specialized courses for training on skills in various fields, especially in the field of political action at the national and local levels and in the field of economic entrepreneurship.

Areas of Intervention:

First area: Enabling women to acquire the personal qualifications for leadership.

- Through family education, by disseminating the educational principles that promote personal development and the spirit of responsibility among female children as well as among male children.
- Through school education:
 - Adopting educational methods that develop among male and female students' critical thinking, the ability to participate in logical debate, intellectual independence, and an understanding of and respect for differences and discrepancies.
 - Spreading knowledge of human rights and the rights guaranteed by law to children, both male and female.
 - Disseminating educational principles that enhance the personality development of children within families through parent committees.
 - Organizing extracurricular activities that provide male and female students with opportunities to participate in public debates.
 - Incorporating mediation and conflict resolution skills into teaching programs.
 - Through specialized training courses on mediation and conflict resolution organized within the framework of universities and institutes.

Second area: Enabling women to acquire technical skills for leadership:

- Organizing digital literacy training courses, especially for young women in rural areas.
- Organizing educational courses for women wishing

to run for elections at the national and local levels.

- Organizing educational courses on the requirements for establishing a private business and on how to establish and manage it.
- Encouraging municipal councils to organize specialized educational and cultural courses for young women.

Second sub-objective: Achieving legislative and administrative reforms that support women's participation in leadership.

In order to reach leadership positions, women need, one, the application of the principle of equality, especially in promotion procedures at work, and two, the legal or administrative procedures that respond to the demand for positive discrimination. Positive discrimination may include temporary women's quota in electoral laws and administrative appointments. The contradiction between the demand for the rule of equality and its violation in favor of women has always been the subject of human rights controversy.

However, it must be pointed out here that the demand for equality with regard to women's issues in general has an absolute scope, while the demand for the application of positive discrimination, in favor of women, is usually limited to specific areas in which implementing the principle of equality requires measures to consolidate the application of the legal frameworks regulating these areas. Usually, the required positive discrimination is temporary and aims at correcting a certain imbalance.

For example, demanding a women's quota in an electoral law, to ensure that women have a share in the election results, can be justified by the fact that women's chances of success should be supported to correct the imbalance resulting from the fact that male candidates enjoy a social status that is distinct from that of female candidates and gives them an advantage in winning.

Imbalance in equal opportunities for both men and women is often observed in societies in terms of reaching leadership positions. There are inequalities in opportunities for leadership positions in Lebanon, especially in the fields of politics and economics, which requires an effort to push the legislator to take measures to correct this imbalance and establish gender-balanced opportunities.

The concept of leadership should be viewed from the perspective of the rules of good governance, combating corruption, and working to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This approach is inevitable in particular in the current situation in Lebanon, where there is an urgent need for a fresh start in political, economic, and development practice, and for the advancement of human development indicators in all regions.

Therefore, this Strategy sets any action to achieve legislative and administrative reforms that support women's participation in leadership, within the framework of the rules of good governance (in achieving the rule of law and human rights, and applying the principles of equity, participation, and accountability), within the framework of efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Therefore, areas of intervention to achieve this objective are either initiatives that fall within the framework of taking measures to support women's participation in leadership positions, or initiatives that fall within the implementation of the rules of good governance and aim to intensify women's participation in development work at the local level.

Areas of Intervention:

First area: Taking measures to support women's participation in the fields of politics, security, defense, and economics.

Topics:

A- The Political Field:

- Adopting legislation that enshrines the principle of transitionally granting women quotas in leadership positions in the legislative and executive power.
- Adopting work mechanisms that guarantee women's participation in parliamentary committees, dialogue bodies, and foreign delegations.
- Establishing rules within political party frameworks in Lebanon that guarantee women's participation in party leadership bodies.
- Exerting pressure to get parties to adopt women's issues as issues related to providing conditions for sustainable development and to nominate women for elections and for senior administrative, governmental, and high-level positions in public administration and in municipal councils.
- Intensifying cooperation with the media to secure their support for women's access to political leadership positions in constitutional institutions and within political parties.

B- The Security and Military Sectors:

- Raising the percentage of women volunteering in the security and military services, and raising the maximum limit for this percentage out of the total number of military personnel in the army.
- Ensuring equal promotion conditions between women and men in the security and defense sectors, and ensuring equality in rights and duties and in assigning military and security responsibilities to men and women.
- Adopting mechanisms within security and military institutions that guarantee the protection of women from exposure to sexual harassment.
- Intensifying efforts to spread a culture of gender equality and combat violence against women and girls, among members of the security and military forces.

- Taking the needs of female officers into account in providing health and social services, infrastructure, and equipment.
- Introducing appropriate mechanisms to follow up on the issue of gender equality in the security and military services.

C- In the Economic Field:

- Adopting legislations that guarantee women's participation in economic, financial, and development leadership councils and bodies in the public sector.
- Adopting a law that guarantees women's participation in the membership of boards of directors in joint-stock companies.
- Facilitating the conditions for women to obtain funding to finance and develop private businesses.
- Providing educational courses for women to disseminate knowledge about the rules for establishing and managing a private business.

Second area: Applying the rules of good governance:

- In the strict application of sanctions for combating violence and bullying campaigns against politically active women.
- In adopting transparent mechanisms in the appointment of senior administrative employees and in administrative promotion procedures.
- In ensuring that election laws and voting mechanisms guarantee the independence of voters, equality between candidates, and the fight against bribery.

Third area: Intensifying women's participation in development work at the local level within municipalities:

- Disseminating knowledge about the development role of municipalities, the services they provide, and the tasks assigned to the municipal police, through mainstream media and social media, and by organizing extensive periodic meetings with town

residents.

- Organizing training courses for women wishing to run for municipal council membership to enhance their personal capabilities and inform them of the working mechanisms in municipal councils.
- Amending the Municipal Law to ensure women's participation in municipal council, committees, and the municipal police force.
- Organizing awareness campaigns to call on influential forces at the local level to support the candidacy of women for municipal council membership.
- Supporting women who are active in municipalities, technically and financially, to enable them to take initiatives to launch development projects within the municipality jurisdiction, and manage the implementation of these projects.
- Addressing men as well as women in the advertisements calling for membership in the municipal police force.
- Incorporating in the conditions for joining the municipal police force an acceptable academic level as well undertaking training courses that include topics like human rights issues, gender equality, and ways to combat violence against women and girls.
- Assigning joint committees in municipalities to follow up on women's issues and their empowerment.
- Adoption by municipalities of budgets that take into account gender equality.
- Networking at the national level between women active in municipal councils and in the committees operating within the scope of these councils.
- Resuming work on the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy that was developed by the Ministry of the Displaced and the Central Inspection in 2020, through establishing cooperation between the central authorities, the municipal councils, and the civil society.
- Adopting mechanisms in municipalities to punish sexual harassment attempts, prevent them from occurring, and spread awareness about them.

Fourth Main Objective:

The principle of equality between women and men is established by laws, legislations, policies, and administrations, and is in force in the security, judicial, and administrative agencies. Its implementation is monitored by specialized agencies and mechanisms.

The principle of equality between women and men is established by laws, legislations, policies, and administrations, and is in force in the security, judicial, and administrative agencies. Its implementation is monitored by specialized agencies and mechanisms.

By achieving this objective, this Strategy seeks to make gender equality one of the principles included in the prevailing perception of public good within society and the Government.

What this Strategy aims at is to make laws, other legislations, and policies adopted by governments consistent with the principles on which the Constitution is based, the first of which are the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates the right of every human being to enjoy all rights and freedoms without any discrimination and “without any distinction between men and women.” At the same time, this Strategy seeks to ensure that laws and other legislations are actually implemented in their spirit in practice, rather than being merely legislations on paper. The same applies to the pledges that the State has committed to in international conventions.

Lebanon, which acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1996, pledged to implement Article 2, which requires that States Parties undertake “to embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle.”

Lebanon also pledged in Paragraph 2 of Article 16 of the Convention (to which it did not have reservations) that “the betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to

specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official registry compulsory.”

Of course, Lebanon’s commitment to CEDAW was contradictory to the reservations contained in the law authorizing the adoption of the Convention, which included two main topics affecting the life of women, namely the issue of equality of women and men as to the right to pass on their nationality to their children (Paragraph 2 of Article 9 of the Convention) and the issue of equality of men and women with regard to women’s rights in marriage and their responsibilities for their children and with regard to the family name (subparagraphs c, d, f, g of Paragraph “1” of Article 16 of the Convention).

Lebanon also adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which includes the goal of achieving gender equality, given that this equality, in addition to being a condition for respecting human rights, is also a necessary factor for achieving sustainable development due to its social and economic dimensions. After successive and prolonged crises, our country must follow a developmental path to rise again, and thus strive to achieve gender equality.

On another note, the required reform in legislation and policies to achieve equality is part of the initiatives that the Lebanese government has planned to implement in compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

Hence, this Strategy is based on the Charter of Human Rights, the Constitution of the Lebanese Republic, its international commitments and its plans to implement these commitments, in order to achieve the goal of integrating the principle of equality of women and men into the actual laws, policies and procedures in force, and reducing inequalities. To this end, it adopts two sub-objectives as follows:

First sub-objective: Adopting the principle of gender equality in legislative texts, policies, and their implementation procedures.

Second sub-objective: Strengthening mechanisms for implementing the principle of gender equality in policies and practices.

First sub-objective: Adopting the principle of gender equality in legislative texts, policies, and their implementation procedures:

Achieving this objective requires reviewing all laws in force in view of freeing them from provisions discriminatory against women. In addition to the noticeable contradiction between the constitutional principles mentioned above and the reservations made by law to CEDAW, many laws and legislations still discriminate against women in areas that are not officially subject to reservation.

In fact, the foundations upon which the legislative structure in Lebanon was based are derived from various sources dating back to successive historical eras throughout which different legal concepts of the legal personality of both women and men as holders of rights and duties evolved. Moreover, for various reasons, not the least of which is the succession of local and regional political crises, the updating of legislation has slowed down, especially with regard to women's rights; to this day the status of women as citizens in every sense of the word remains confusing, as Lebanese law still does not recognize their right to pass on their nationality to their children.

Moreover, legislation has not made significant progress on the issue of establishing fair rules for women's rights in family relationships, and to this day, despite the existence of a number of proposals and projects to introduce a civil law for personal status, the constitutional principles supporting gender equality are still excluded from application in

the family sphere, which is regulated in Lebanon by the 19 recognized religious sects.

On the other hand, efforts aimed at convincing legislators and government officials of the necessity of adopting policies of positive discrimination towards women have not succeeded to date in some areas in which women need to be encouraged to be active, in the first stage, such as winning in parliamentary and municipal elections, as women's participation is still low in parliamentary and municipal work.

Therefore, this Strategy includes, among the areas of intervention and topics of action to achieve this objective, the adoption of reform policies that include positive discrimination in favor of women in some areas, related in particular to assuming leadership positions in the political and economic fields, and generally take the interests of women and men into consideration in adhering to the rules of good governance in decision-making as well as in their implementation procedures

First area: Ridding laws of discriminatory provisions against women.

Topics:

- 1- In the Criminal Code:
 - The perpetrator of rape is exempted from punishment if he is married to the victim (Article 503)
 - The perpetrator may escape punishment if he seduces or has intercourse with a minor who has reached the age of fifteen, if he proceeds to marry her (Articles 505 and 518)
 - A woman is punished for having an abortion, except in the case of a therapeutic abortion due to the serious danger to her life (Articles 541 and 544)
 - The perpetrator of the murder of a woman can still benefit from mitigating circumstances under

Article 252 of the Criminal Code despite nullifying the concept of mitigating circumstances in what was known as honor killings.

-2- In the Labor Law:

- Most workers in the agricultural sector and in domestic service, most of whom are women, are not covered by the Labor Law.

- Maternity leave is limited to ten weeks, while the International Labor Organization (ILO) recommends no less than fourteen weeks.

- ILO Convention No. 190 Concerning the Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work has not been ratified.

-3- In the Social Security Law:

- An insured woman cannot insure her husband unless he is unable to secure his livelihood due to a disability or if he is over the age of sixty, while a man has the right to insure his wife notwithstanding these conditions.

- The children of an insured woman are only entitled to family allowances if both spouses agree that the husband will waive his children's entitlement to health allowances to his insured wife and if the husband's official insurer agrees to this.

-4- Implementation of Paragraph (2) of Article 16 of the CEDAW by adopting national legislation to "specify a minimum age for marriage"

-5- Amendment of the Code of Civil Procedure to include in the competence of the Court of Cassation the power to consider decisions issued by religious and spiritual courts, knowing that this law authorizes the Court of Cassation to consider in its general assembly any objection to a decision issued by a religious or spiritual court due to the lack of jurisdiction of this court or for violating a fundamental principle related to public order.

Second area: Lifting reservations to CEDAW

- Paragraph 2 of Article 9 of CEDAW on equal rights between men and women with respect to the nationality of their children, by adopting a law that recognizes Lebanese women's right to pass on

their nationality to their children.

- Paragraphs c, d, f, and g of Article 16, Paragraph "1" of CEDAW, with the adoption of a national law that regulates the personal status of Lebanese men and women and equates them, regardless of the sect they belong to, in rights and responsibilities, in matters related to equal rights in marriage, and in birth rights as to her children and her responsibilities for them.

Third area: Adopting a legislative policy that includes transitory positive discrimination initiatives in favor of women.

- Adopting a women's quota in the parliamentary elections law and the municipal law.

- Adopting the principle of parity in administrative appointments, especially in first and second category jobs and in economic councils.

- Approving a female quota of no less than one-third on the boards of directors of joint-stock companies.

- Adopting the principle of allocating a quota for women in the leadership councils of trade unions and clubs.

- Adopting a law that protects politically active women, especially women candidates for political office, from exposure to violence, threats of violence, or defamation campaigns, including campaigns via means of electronic communication and media.

Fourth area: Integrating the gender equality approach into policies and legislative reform:

Topics:

- Adopting policies that are favorable to equal distribution of family, economic, social, and political roles between men and women through:

- Providing the opportunity for men to carry out family duties, such as introducing paternity leave and sick leave for children, from which the child benefits as well as the mother.

- Encouraging the establishment of licensed

nurseries for young children in all regions and regulating their activities.

- Adopting legislation and decisions to organize the work of public administrations that require taking the interests of both genders into consideration in policies and programs and in plans to promote integrity and combat corruption.
- Extending the legal period for registering newborns from one to five years and canceling newborn registration fees.

Fifth area: Implementing some legal texts that have not yet been executed by issuing their implementation decrees:

- Topics:

- Establishing a special fund at the Ministry of Social Affairs to assist victims of crimes of domestic violence and sexual harassment.
- Establishing an account with the Ministry of Social Affairs to support and rehabilitate victims of crimes of human trafficking.
- Implementing the provisions of the Amendment Law to the Law of the Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence regarding assigning judges for examining complaints of crimes of violence to look into cases of domestic violence and establishing a unit specialized in crimes of domestic violence at the General Directorate of the Internal Security Forces.
- Applying sickness indemnities and maternity compensation stipulated in the Social Security Law.

Sixth area: Training law enforcement in the judicial and security agencies to put laws and their implementation decrees into practice, taking into account gender differences.

Second sub-objective: Strengthening mechanisms for implementing the principle of gender equality

in policies and practices.

The follow-up on the application of the principle of equality in policies and practices falls within the follow-up on the implementation of reform and development policies, and therefore requires cooperation between various official bodies and commitment on the part of the legislative, executive and judicial authorities. The Platform for Action for the Beijing Conference, in which Lebanon participated in 1995, stated that the national machineries for the advancement of women are considered as the central unit for coordinating support for the government-wide mainstreaming of a gender-equality perspective process into all policy areas.

It was also stated among the Platform's strategic objectives that governments must: "Based on a strong political commitment, create a national machinery, where it does not exist, and strengthen, as appropriate, existing national machineries, for the advancement of women at the highest possible level of government; it should have clearly defined mandates and authority; critical elements would be adequate resources and the ability and competence to influence policy and formulate and review legislation; among other things, it should perform policy analysis, undertake advocacy, communication, coordination and monitoring of implementation."

Thereby is the importance of the coordinating role that national machineries for the advancement of women can play. We may mention that the body entrusted with this task in Lebanon is currently the National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW), which was established following Lebanon's participation in the international conference in Beijing in September in 1995, pursuant to Law No. 1998/720, which entrusted it with consultative tasks with the government and

liaison and coordination tasks with administrations and institutions, with civil society organizations, and with international bodies and organizations.

NCLW cooperates, in particular, in its activities aimed at implementing the principle of gender equality in Lebanese legislation, with the Women and Children Parliamentary Committee. It also cooperates in formulating government policies, and in particular, with the Ministry of Social Affairs, which includes a department specialized in women's issues. It is worth recalling that the Lebanese government adopted in 2019 a National Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which was developed by the NCLW in cooperation with its partners in the public sector and civil society, with international support.

Developing follow-up mechanisms on the principle of equality in policies and practices today requires intensified coordination efforts, at all levels, from policy-making and preparing legislative texts to monitoring their actual implementation and monitoring and evaluating their results. Hence, the work to achieve this goal includes the axes of strengthening coordination mechanisms at all levels and with all concerned parties, adopting and approving clear mechanisms for this purpose, as well as strengthening and expanding the network for equality policy integration and expansion.

Areas of Intervention:

First: Developing coordination mechanisms:

Topics:

- Policy formulation.
- Preparing legislative texts and seeking their adoption.
- Following up and evaluating the implementation of policies, legislation, and initiatives.

- Monitoring and evaluating the results of policies, legislation, and initiatives.
- Adopting clear coordination work structures.

Second: Strengthening the network of Gender Focal Points and assigning units or committees for gender equality among decision-makers in ministries and public administrations that coordinate with the national mechanism.

Topics:

- Strengthening the position of Gender Focal Points within public administrations and ministries, and emphasizing the allocation of a portion of their functions to ensure gender mainstreaming into the administration to which they belong.
- Establishing committees with specific tasks for gender equality in ministries and public administrations.
- Encouraging municipalities to incorporate equality issues into their development programs.
- Encouraging public administrations to conduct periodic audits on their respect for gender equality requirements.

Third: Developing monitoring and evaluation tools at the national mechanisms, such as developing the NCLW Lebanon National Gender Observatory.

Topics:

- Developing the work of the Lebanon National Gender Observatory.
- Developing the work of the Gender Barometer.
- Transferring the results of studies completed in the field of gender equality to parliamentarians and government officials, as well as to trade unions and parties.

Fifth Main Objective:

The prevailing culture is based on the principles of human rights for men and women, while the means and outlets for its dissemination are aware of their responsibilities.

The prevailing culture is based on the principles of human rights for men and women, while the means and outlets for its dissemination are aware of their responsibilities.

Achieving this objective aims to place the principle of gender equality at the core of the prevailing societal culture in Lebanon. This principle is an embodiment of the human right not to discriminate between people, and it falls within the scope of the rights of humankind.

Culture is usually defined as representing the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a certain human group, and within the concept of culture there are lifestyles, including arts, beliefs, and institutions that are passed down through generations. The culture prevailing in a society affects the choices of individuals, and individuals themselves influence others and society with their choices.

Culture, like societies, is not static, but rather a set of living entities that are constantly renewed and evolving as a result of social and economic changes resulting from political, technological, and environmental developments. Therefore, culture can be developed through amending laws, changing government policies, and through the work of influential groups in civil society. On the issue of gender equality, for example, there is no doubt that the policies of universalizing girls' education, opening the labor market to women, and combating violence against them have contributed to developing how women are seen in the prevailing culture.

In consequence, we approach the work aiming to achieve gender equality from a cultural perspective. The literature on gender equality issues in our society has always described the cultural factor as the main obstacle to the evolution of laws and the success of policies aimed at achieving equality. Therefore, this Strategy considers that the issue of gender equality should be approached from a cultural angle by addressing it within a more comprehensive framework, the human rights framework, which represents an integrated, universally recognized intellectual system within which the principle of gender equality is

included, along with other rights and freedoms that guarantee human dignity.

From this perspective, it is clear that achieving gender equality is not a class-specific demand that benefits women, but rather a goal that achieves the public interest. Therefore, men as well as women should be as involved in achieving it, especially in the field of society's culture, which is a product of the laws, rules, and institutions regulating this society.

This culture has evolved throughout history, mainly through men's action. Hence, this Strategy considers that striving to achieve its goals in the cultural field requires cooperation with those supervising the setting of the standard rules of the social system, including legislators, religious guides, and others. It also requires cooperation with authors and designers of popular images about women and men and their relationships, through family and school education, and through the mainstream media and social media. This entails the need to work on generalizing the principles of equality in raising male and female children in the family, and to ensure that textbooks and teaching methods take into account the various aspects of gender equality. This also entails working to gain the support of influencers on social media for equality issues.

The two sub-objectives that this Strategy identifies to achieve the goal of ensuring the prevailing culture is based on the principles of human rights for men and women, and rendering the means of disseminating them fully responsible, are as follows:

First sub-objective: Adopting the principle of gender equality instead of the principle of men's superiority over women in the normative rules regulating society.

Second sub-objective: Disseminating images of men and women and their societal roles that embody the principles of gender equality and the culture of human rights.

First sub-objective: Adopting the principle of gender equality instead of the principle of men's superiority over women in the normative rules regulating society. The normative rules governing society are derived from the laws in force as well as from the customs

prevailing in a particular society. They are usually based on general principles that justify the behaviors that they foresee. One of these principles prevailing in our societies is the statement that men are of higher value than women, which provides them with many privileges, especially in the laws regulating family relations and inheritance, and in the nationality and penal laws. The socially accepted behaviors also distinguish between women and men, and what is permissible for men is not available for women.

In general, societies complain of a gap between men and women in terms of autonomy. Women do not have the equal right of access to resources as men, and their ability to influence the decision-making processes regulating society and sometimes even the decisions directing their lives is still limited. The opportunities available to them are also still relatively limited.

Therefore, achieving this objective aims to attaining equality by influencing the culture on which prevailing laws and customs are based. As mentioned previously, this can be developed and is actually evolving due to economic and social transformations, technological development, and the repercussions of the acceleration of advancement in communication and transportation means.

Ideology must keep pace with modern developments, and societies aspiring to progress and growth must be aware of the need to adapt their laws to the reality of the way of life so that these laws do not become mere formal structures in which cases of evading them exceed cases of putting them into practice. It is worth recalling the interaction that exists between the law and its applications, on the one hand, and the prevailing culture and established behaviors on the other.

Therefore, working to achieve this goal will include working to bring about development in the considerations on which laws, judicial rulings, and procedures are based, so that they are more in line with the realistic needs of society, which is now in need of an actual application of the principle of gender equality, in compliance with the principles of the Lebanese Constitution, respecting human rights, and meeting the needs of sustainable development that can only be

achieved when working towards gender equality. The work to achieve this objective will also include topics through which the aim would be to bring about a shift in societal attitudes.

Areas of Intervention:

First: Working to integrate the principle of gender equality into the reference principles that are adopted in legislation and in the judiciary:

Topics:

- Expanding and deepening the study of human rights and related international treaties in universities, especially in law schools.
- Working to rid the laws of provisions that violate the principle of gender equality.
- Expanding the scope of work of the committees and departments concerned with preserving human rights in Parliament and in all administrations.
- Cooperating with spiritual guides to integrate human rights principles into sectarian legislation and the judicial rulings implementing them.
- Intensifying training for those responsible for applying security and judicial procedures to respect the rules of human rights and gender equality.
- Developing studies aimed at highlighting the roles played by women, but not men, in society.

Second: Influencing popular behaviors.

Topics:

- Spreading knowledge among families about the bases of raising children on the principles of human rights, gender equality, and preserving human dignity.
- Disseminating knowledge about the biographies of women pioneers in science, arts, and humanitarian work.
- Disseminating knowledge about the economic value represented by the unpaid work that women perform in family care, housekeeping, and in family businesses.

Second sub-objective: Disseminating images of men and women and their societal roles that embody the principles of gender equality and the culture of human rights:

Societal culture changes with the change in socio-

economic considerations, the development of means of production and communication, the change in lifestyles, and with it changes the nature of human relations. Over the past two centuries, the world has witnessed a radical transformation in the relations between workers and employers after the industrial revolutions, and today, it is about to see new transformations as a result of digital revolution. During this period, considerations changed regarding the distribution of roles between women and men, and women demonstrated their ability to carry out all leadership roles in economics, politics, science, and arts, which were previously the sole privilege of men. Women's participation in the leadership of society on an equal footing with men has become one of the requirements for sustainable growth. Nonetheless, this reality does not mean that attitudes toward women's rights and the principle of equality evolve automatically and immediately with the growth of the roles they play.

Likewise, the stereotypes formed about women, their roles, and the relationships between them and men do not change automatically. The change in the images formed about people and in the description of their positions does not correlate with the development taking place in human relations in reality, nor do the normative rules expressed by legislation and popular behaviors directly correlate with this development. Repeating the same images and judgments about women and men and what their respective roles should be hinders the production of new patterns of relations between the sexes that are based on equality and respect for others and are more closely compatible with reality. Stereotyped images of women and men, their societal roles, and the nature of the relationships between them are transmitted through family and school education, and through curricula. These images are also promoted through the media, and literary and artistic works.

Therefore, those in charge of education, media, communication, and cultural production must be aware of the impact of the promotion of negative images of women, violent practices against them, and images that only show of the characteristics of masculinity the power men have over women. Our societies are in need of promoting the qualities of mutual respect, equality and parity in roles, as well as positive understandings of the qualities of femininity and masculinity.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the connotations carried by the language used. Feminizing the names of positions, ranks, and titles when it comes to women helps highlight women's contributions to building their society. Moreover, using the feminine form, next to the masculine form, in texts that deal with women and men together, helps put an end to the camouflage of women's contributions.

Hence, this Strategy adopts the following areas of intervention to achieve this objective:

Areas of Intervention:

First: Education:

Topics:

- Encouraging families to pursue equality between sons and daughters.
- Adopting stereotypical images of men and women that recognize women in leadership roles and that are based on a positive understanding of masculinity and femininity.

Second: Cooperation with institutions and influential figures in the fields of media, advertising, and social media in:

Topics:

- Conducting surveys, statistical, and analytical studies that address the conditions of women and issues of gender equality, that evaluate the results of policies and programs in place, and that disseminate the conclusions reached on the widest possible scale.
- Highlighting the pioneering roles played by women by publishing specialized studies and CVs, and conducting interviews with influential women in society.
- Valuing the caring roles of men and encouraging them to carry them out.
- Highlighting the economic value of unpaid work carried out by women in urban and rural areas.
- Feminizing the names of positions, ranks, and titles when it comes to women, and using the feminine form next to the masculine form when women and men are both concerned.
- Highlighting women's success stories in various fields.

Outline of
the National Strategy for Women
in Lebanon 2022-2030

First Main Objective: Violence against women and girls is socially rejected and legally prohibited, and protection and assistance to survivors are available in terms of security, judicial interventions, as well as materially and psychologically, while psychological rehabilitation is available to the perpetrators.

First sub-objective: Expanding knowledge about the data surrounding the occurrence of cases of violence and the incidence of violence against women and girls.

Areas of Intervention.

First: Mainstreaming the gender equality approach at the sectoral level, and adopting the approach based on screening cases of violence when providing medical, legal, security, social and educational services... through diagnostic forms/files with the aim of monitoring these cases.

Second: Developing a cooperation and coordination mechanism between the competent security agencies, competent official departments, civil society organizations and medical centers that provide support to victims, in order to determine the incidence of violence against women and identify all significant relevant data, including: the social characteristics of the surrounding environment and the personal characteristics of the perpetrator of violence.

Third: Institutionalizing periodic analysis of the data available through the Lebanon National Gender Observatory, and publishing its results.

Fourth: Institutionalizing the analysis of periodic opinion polls and studies issued on

society's view regarding violence against women and girls, and publishing their results.

Fifth: Creating joint mechanisms between the public and civil society sectors to formulate policies based on data analysis to combat violence, and to ensure and monitor their implementation.

Second sub-objective: Adopting intensive initiatives to prevent the spread of violence against women and girls and to protect them.

Areas of Intervention:

First: Legislation:

Topics:

- Expanding the definition of violence against women and girls in laws to include every abusive act committed by the perpetrator against the will of the victim.
- Adopting a civil law setting the minimum age for marriage at 18 years.
- Toughening penalties for crimes of violence against women.
- Implementing in a strict manner the penalties imposed by judicial rulings in cases of violence against women, such as making them not subject to reduction for mitigating reasons, and excluding them from any amnesty laws.
- Providing greater protection for women and their children in the provisions of the Law of the Protection from Domestic Violence.
- Providing opportunities for perpetrators of violence against women to undergo rehabilitation courses in specialized centers.
- Implementing the mechanisms stipulated in Law 293/2014, such as establishing courts that are competent in terms of cases of violence.
- Creating the special account at the Ministry of Social Affairs, as foreseen by the Law, to assist the domestic violence victims.

- Toughening the penalty for violence if the victim is a child and/or a woman with special needs or an elderly woman, depending on the characteristics of the perpetrator.

Second: Adopting mechanisms for reporting, following up, and punishing cases of sexual harassment in public administrations, municipalities, private institutions, and public places.

Third: Disseminating knowledge among women and men about the provisions of laws punishing the perpetration of violence against women and girls, and the reporting and protection mechanisms, through mainstream media and social media, education in schools and universities, trade unions, professional groups, health and social service centers, and municipalities, with special attention paid to providing awareness programs for population groups with a vulnerable social situation.

Fourth: Spreading the culture of gender equality by seeking to highlight the qualities of ability, responsibility and success in women, and by promoting images of masculinity that support gender equality through mainstream media and social media, and by involving men (meetings with clerics and decision makers...).

Fifth: Adapting the methods adopted to prevent violence according to the target groups:

- For girls: Spreading awareness among them about their rights and the dangers of early marriage, cyber extortion, and sexual harassment, as well as about ways to seek help within the framework of schools and the services available through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the security services.

- For elderly women: by providing support to families with elderly persons and by monitoring

the work of elderly care institutions according to the standards in force, and providing support to them.

- Female children and women with disabilities: by providing them with the necessary protection and services, and ensuring that the services provided to victims of violence are inclusive.

- Women displaced and refugees: by working to create an anti-violence environment within the groups to which they belong.

- For foreign domestic workers: by improving the working conditions in employment contracts, abandoning the conditions of what is known as the “sponsorship system or kafala”, expanding the scope of the Labor Law to include the domestic service sector, and activating the Ministry of Labor’s oversight over working conditions.

- For female prisoners: by guaranteeing their rights and their human dignity, by providing the necessary protection and services.

- Victims of human trafficking: by ensuring that they are able to file complaints and providing them with legal assistance and interpretation services, and by building the capacity of members of the security and judicial services to identify women and girls who are victims of trafficking.

- Women living with HIV.

Third sub-objective: Ensuring access to justice and providing support to victims.

Areas of Intervention:

First: Facilitating procedures for reporting a crime and filing a judicial complaint, adopting a unified referral system, developing a special system to enable victims to access justice even during crises, and applying approved standard operating procedures.

Second: Enabling municipal police officers to coordinate in cases of violence against women and girls with the Internal Security Forces, equipping police stations and training their officers to receive victims.

Third: Adopting unified concepts and expressions for all those dealing with all issues of violence, according to what is contained in the NCLW/UNFPA “Gender-Based Violence Lexicon” (2021).

Fourth: Establishing special competent courts to hear cases of violence against women and girls.

Fifth: Providing specialized services for legal aid in cases of violence against women and girls raised before the civil courts and before religious and spiritual courts competent for cases related to personal status.

Sixth: Incorporating considerations specific to women into the procedures adopted for evidence collection, especially in cases that require the expertise of a forensic doctor.

Seventh: Developing health, psychological, and judicial services as well as monetary aid for women and girls who are victims of violence, to be made available at centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and enabling women and girls to earn a living and overcome difficulties.

Eighth: Increasing the number of shelter centers and safe spaces for victims of violence against women and girls, applying quality standards in their work, and making them qualified to receive abused women with their children and to receive abused women with disabilities.

Ninth: Disseminating knowledge about services available to victims of violence and ways to obtain them.

Tenth: Implementing the law on the establishment of a special account with the Ministry of Social Affairs to assist victims of domestic violence and sexual harassment.

Second Main Objective: Women are capable and empowered on personal, educational, economic, and social levels.

First sub-objective: Developing means of social protection for women.

Areas of Intervention

First area: Combating the spread of poverty among women:

- Giving priority to women-headed households in government programs aimed at combating poverty.
- Expanding the scope of work of the centers affiliated with the ministries concerned with development affairs in order to provide assistance and services to the population, especially to women, including primary health care for pregnant women, preventive medicine, mental, sexual and reproductive health services, and menstrual hygiene supplies.
- Providing meals in public schools for students in the elementary classes.
- Municipal councils play a coordinative role between all entities that provide aid and services within their geographical scope; these councils establish cooperative relations with private sector institutions to involve them in providing aid, while adopting transparent work mechanisms.
- Disseminating the announcement of available aid and the conditions for obtaining it on a large scale, especially through digital platforms.

Second area: Developing an integrated social protection system that benefits women on an equal basis with men and specifically ensures:

- Developing the work of the optional health insurance program at the National Social Security Fund (NSSF).
- Expanding the NSSF contributions to include workers in the formal and informal sectors, as well as male and female workers to whom the Labor Law does not apply, especially female agricultural workers and domestic workers.
- Unifying the insurance institutions system and unifying allowances for all workers.
- Adopting an old-age social security system.
- Adopting an optional system that allows male and female retirees to receive a pension salary instead of end-of-service compensation.
- Equality between insured fathers and mothers in obtaining family allowances without the need for a waiver on the part of the insured father, so that children can benefit from health allowances of the insured wife.
- Removing any provision of the Labor Law that directly or indirectly discriminates between women and men.
- Adopting paid, non-transferable paternity leaves, provided that the State and insurers cover these leaves.
- Developing policies that are sensitive and favorable to gender equality at the core of economic and social planning in Lebanon, and working on the implementation of these policies by public and private sector institutions.
- Establishing a social protection and support system for child care, a nursery system that helps parents continue working.

Second sub-objective: Developing factors for human capital accumulation among women.

Areas of Intervention

First area: Providing health care for women of

all age groups.

Topics:

First: The Ministry of Public Health cooperates with the relevant ministries, departments, and municipalities to ensure food safety, clean drinking water, safe drinking water distribution networks, and awareness of the conditions for maintaining health standards in lifestyle, and rules of healthy food.

Second: Raising the level of services provided by dispensaries and developing the services provided by primary health care centers for women by developing their equipment, developing their staff and their capabilities so that health services are available and easily accessible, especially in the areas of:

- Promoting reproductive and sexual health rights and services within an integrated package from a life cycle approach.
- Psychiatric services for women and girls of different age groups and ways to prevent psychological illnesses.
- Preventive medicine, including methods for early detection of breast and cervical cancer, and ways to prevent heart disease, obesity risks, and others.
- Upgrading the referral system from preventive care to specialized services, specifically for critical and serious cases.

Third: Announcing through the media and through municipalities, especially among women from vulnerable social groups, about the services available in primary health centers.

Fourth: The official school curriculum includes educational materials that address reproductive and sexual health, mental health, first aid, health prevention, and healthy lifestyle patterns.

Fifth: Providing health services in public schools, including mental health.

Sixth: Spreading knowledge through mainstream media and social media about the rules of healthy living patterns.

Seventh: Activating the role of the centers affiliated with the Ministry of Social Affairs and supporting them in implementing comprehensive health and social awareness Programs.

Second area: Empowering women educationally, scientifically and technically, and advancing digital literacy.

Topics:

First: Combating school dropout and child marriage through:

- Activating the compulsory education law and expanding its scope.
- Raising awareness about the importance of academic achievement.
- Creating special classes to help low-performing students.
- Organizing awareness campaigns targeting female and male students.
- Providing psychological support by specialists for male and female students.

Second: Providing protection for male and female students from the risk of exposure to violence through:

- Introducing students to the protection services provided by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the possibility of calling a Hotline to request assistance.
- Introducing students to the risks of cyber extortion, the means of seeking help, and the existence of a Hotline to report in the event of incidents.

Third: Integrating the inclusion of men and women with special needs in the educational system.

Fourth: Developing and modifying educational curricula, incorporating the vision of gender equality into the textbooks, and training and sensitizing the educational staff.

Fifth: - Spreading a culture of acceptance of others and a culture of gender equality through:

- Increasing the number of inclusive schools.
- Reviewing the images conveyed by textbooks about women.
- Adopting the values of equality in the educational method.
- Encouraging young males to engage in the educational body.

Sixth: - Including educational materials that aim to:

- Advance digital literacy.
- Raise awareness about health prevention and reproductive health methods and provide spaces to practice sports for girls in particular.

Seventh: Encouraging female students to direct their academic or technical studies or in their field of work to the scope of science and technology and its applications.

Eighth: Creating networks that support the efforts undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and educational institutions through coordination between the Ministry, municipal councils, and civil society organizations.

Third sub-objective: Enabling women to achieve economic independence.

Areas of Intervention:

First area: Developing the personal capabilities of women in the economic field.

Topics:

- Intensifying and institutionalizing the efforts made within both public and private sectors as well as civil society organizations to eradicate digital illiteracy among women, especially in rural areas.
- Encouraging private enterprises to provide training courses to develop women's administrative, productive and commercial capabilities in the fields of craft, industrial, and agricultural production and in the service sector in urban and rural areas.
- Organizing special training courses for women who wish to be self-employed or wish to establish a business, on the procedures that should be carried out, on the rules of business management, resource management, sales techniques, and e-commerce, and focusing on making such courses available in rural areas, while encouraging the municipalities in these areas to provide them to local women.
- Spreading knowledge and awareness among women about the rules of the Labor Law and the Social Security Law in terms of their rights and duties at work as well as social protection.
- Spreading knowledge, especially through schools, universities and youth clubs, about the fields of work available to women in new economic fields (such as investing in alternative energy or in what is known as the green economy and the blue economy) or in using innovative technological means and providing training courses to secure qualifications to work in these fields.
- Spreading knowledge and awareness among women and girls about their economic rights included in personal status laws and civil laws

related to inheritance, marital status, and cases of separation and divorce.

Second area: Creating family and socio-economic conditions favorable to women's work in the economic field.

Topics:

- Working to develop the Labor Law, amend what is known as the sponsorship system, and review it with the aim of abolishing it.
- Adopting gender-responsive budgets, with expenditure that takes into account women's needs and priorities, and tax collection systems that are sensitive to women's reality, which would contribute to including measures that stimulate increased women's participation in the labor market.
- Reforming the current tax structure to address inequalities.
- Having access to credit, including grants and zero-interest loans with favorable terms for guarantees.
- Providing educational opportunities for women, increasing social investment in the formal education system and reforming employment conditions in formal education.
- Recognizing women's unpaid care work and investing in the care economy.
- Expanding the coverage of the National Social Security Fund, establishing an unemployment fund, and developing training programs for the unemployed.
- Working to implement the policy of gender equality in the employment procedures adopted in the public and private sectors, and ensuring that there is no discrimination against pregnant women.
- Alleviating the domestic and family burdens that women bear by seeking to change attitudes and promoting sharing household chores and family care between men and women and by

developing care services for young children in nurseries and developing care services for the elderly by providing day care homes for them.

- Ensuring coordination between the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, Youth and Sports, Economy, and Labor, with the aim of disseminating knowledge of available job opportunities and the qualifications required for them, and creating university and vocational guidance services in schools.
- Encouraging female students to pursue scientific and technological majors in their university and career choices.
- Improving the conditions surrounding work and improving its conditions by encouraging institutions in the public and private sectors to provide safe means of transportation for workers in urban and rural areas and to adopt provisions in the internal regulations of private enterprises (to be approved by the Ministry of Labor) and in the regulations in force in the public institutions and administrations that would ensure the implementation of the law criminalizing sexual harassment, protect the victim, and punish the perpetrator.
- Adopting legal reforms that guarantee gender pay equality, extend maternity leave, allocate time for breastfeeding, and allow for flexible working hours.
- Encouraging women to take economic initiatives through establishing businesses, by facilitating procedures for the creation of startups and SMEs and by providing credit facilities to women entrepreneurs.
- Working to find solutions to facilitate women's land inheritance and ownership of real estate, which helps them obtain loans to invest in economic projects.
- Adapting training courses targeting women who wish to establish businesses and increasing the number of business incubators.

Third Main Objective: Women occupy leadership positions in political, administrative, economic, security, and defense institutions, and participate in drawing up development reforms and implementing them at the national and local levels.

First sub-objective: Providing opportunities for women to acquire the personal qualifications and competencies required for leadership.

Areas of Intervention:

First area: Enabling women to acquire the personal qualifications for leadership.

- Through family education, by disseminating the educational principles that promote personal development and the spirit of responsibility among female children as well as among male children.
- Through school education:
 - Adopting educational methods that develop among male and female students' critical thinking, the ability to participate in logical debate, intellectual independence, and an understanding and respect for differences and discrepancies.
 - Spreading knowledge of human rights and the rights guaranteed by law to children, both male and female.
 - Disseminating educational principles that enhance the personality development of children within families through parent committees.
 - Organizing extracurricular activities that provide male and female students with opportunities to participate in public debates.
 - Incorporating mediation and conflict resolution skills into teaching programs.
 - Through specialized training courses on mediation and conflict resolution organized

within the framework of universities and institutes.

Second area: Enabling women to acquire technical skills for leadership:

- Organizing digital literacy training courses, especially for young women in rural areas.
- Organizing educational courses for women wishing to run for elections at the national and local levels.
- Organizing educational courses on the requirements for establishing a private business and on how to establish and manage it.
- Encouraging municipal councils to organize specialized educational and cultural courses for young women.

Second sub-objective: Achieving legislative and administrative reforms that support women's participation in leadership.

Areas of Intervention:

First area: Taking measures to support women's participation in the fields of politics, security, defense, and economics.

Topics:

A- The Political Field:

- Adopting legislation that enshrines the principle of transitionally granting women quotas in leadership positions in the legislative and executive power.
- Adopting work mechanisms that guarantee women's participation in parliamentary committees, dialogue bodies, and foreign delegations.
- Establishing rules within political party frameworks in Lebanon that guarantee women's participation in party leadership bodies.

- Exerting pressure to get parties to adopt women's issues as issues related to providing conditions for sustainable development and to nominate women for elections and for senior administrative, governmental, and high-level positions in public administration and in municipal councils.
- Intensifying cooperation with the media to secure their support for women's access to political leadership positions in constitutional institutions and within political parties.

B- The Security and Military Sectors:

- Raising the percentage of women volunteering in the security and military services, and raising the maximum limit for this percentage out of the total number of military personnel in the army.
- Ensuring equal promotion conditions between women and men in the security and defense sectors, and ensuring equality in rights and duties and in assigning military and security responsibilities to men and women.
- Adopting mechanisms within security and military institutions that guarantee the protection of women from exposure to sexual harassment.
- Intensifying efforts to spread a culture of gender equality and combat violence against women and girls, among members of the security and military forces.
- Taking the needs of female officers into account in providing health and social services, infrastructure, and equipment.
- Introducing appropriate mechanisms to follow up on the issue of gender equality in the security and military services.

C- In the Economic Field:

- Adopting legislations that guarantee women's participation in economic, financial and development leadership councils and bodies in

the public sector.

- Adopting a law that guarantees women's participation in the membership of boards of directors in joint-stock companies.
- Facilitating the conditions for women to obtain funding to finance and develop private businesses.
- Providing educational courses targeting women to disseminate knowledge about the rules for establishing and managing a private business.

Second area: Applying the rules of good governance:

- In the strict application of sanctions for combating violence and bullying campaigns against politically active women.
- In adopting transparent mechanisms in the appointment of senior administrative employees and in administrative promotion procedures.
- In ensuring that election laws and voting mechanisms guarantee the independence of voters, equality between candidates, and the fight against bribery.

Third area: Intensifying women's participation in development work at the local level within municipalities:

- Disseminating knowledge about the development role of municipalities, the services they provide, and the tasks assigned to the municipal police, through mainstream media and social media, and by organizing extensive periodic meetings with town residents.
- Organizing training courses for women wishing to run for municipal council membership to enhance their personal capabilities and inform them of the working mechanisms in municipal councils.
- Amending the Municipal Law to ensure women's participation in municipal council,

committees, and the municipal police force.

- Organizing awareness campaigns to call on influential forces at the local level to support the candidacy of women for municipal council membership.
- Supporting women who are active in municipalities, technically and financially, to enable them to take initiatives to launch development projects within the municipality jurisdiction, and manage the implementation of these projects.
- Addressing men as well as women in the advertisements calling for membership in the municipal police force.
- Incorporating in the conditions for joining the municipal police an acceptable academic level as well as undertaking training courses that include topics like human rights issues, gender equality, and ways to combat violence against women and girls.
- Assigning joint committees in municipalities to follow up on women's issues and their empowerment.
- Adoption by municipalities of budgets that take into account gender equality.
- Networking at the national level between women active in municipal councils and in the committees operating within the scope of these councils.
- Resuming work on the implementation of the Rural Development Strategy that was developed by the Ministry of the Displaced and the Central Inspection in 2020, through establishing cooperation between the central authorities, the municipal councils, and the civil society.
- Adopting mechanisms in municipalities to punish sexual harassment attempts, prevent them from occurring, and spread awareness about them.

Fourth Main Objective: The principle of equality between women and men is established by laws, legislations, policies, and administrations, and is in force in the security, judicial, and administrative agencies. Its implementation is monitored by specialized agencies and mechanisms.

First sub-objective: Adopting the principle of gender equality in legislative texts, policies, and its implementation procedures:

First area of intervention: Ridding laws of discriminatory provisions against women.

Topics:

-1- In the Criminal Code:

- The perpetrator of rape is exempted from punishment if he is married to the victim (Article 503)
- The perpetrator may escape punishment if he seduces or has intercourse with a minor who has reached the age of fifteen, if he proceeds to marry her (Articles 505 and 518)
- A woman is punished for having an abortion, except in the case of a therapeutic abortion due to the serious danger to her life (Articles 541 and 544)
- The perpetrator of the murder of a woman can still benefit from mitigating circumstances under Article 252 of the Criminal Code despite nullifying the concept of mitigating circumstances in what was known as honor killings.

-2- In the Labor Law:

- Most workers in the agricultural sector and in domestic service, most of whom are women, are not covered by the Labor Law.
- Maternity leave is limited to ten weeks, while the International Labor Organization (ILO) recommends no less than fourteen weeks.
- ILO Convention No. 190 Concerning the

Elimination of Violence and Harassment in the World of Work has not been ratified.

-3- In the Social Security Law:

- An insured woman cannot insure her husband unless he is unable to secure his livelihood due to a disability or if he is over the age of sixty, while a man has the right to insure his wife notwithstanding these conditions.
- The children of an insured woman are only entitled to family allowances if both spouses agree that the husband will waive his children's entitlement to health allowances to his insured wife and if the husband's official insurer agrees to this.

-4- Implementation of Paragraph (2) of Article 16 of CEDAW by adopting national legislation to "specify a minimum age for marriage".

-5- Amendment of the Code of Civil

Procedure to include in the competence of the Court of Cassation the power to consider decisions issued by religious and spiritual courts.

Second area of intervention: Lifting reservations to CEDAW

- Paragraph 2 of Article 9 of CEDAW on equal rights between men and women with respect to the nationality of children, by adopting a law that recognizes Lebanese women's right to pass on their nationality to their children.
- Paragraphs c, d, f, and g of Article 16, Paragraph "1" of CEDAW, with the adoption of a national law that regulates the personal status of Lebanese men and women and equates them, regardless of the sect they belong to, in rights and responsibilities, in matters related to equal rights in marriage, and in birth rights as to her children and her responsibilities for them.

Third area of intervention: Adopting a legislative policy that includes transitory positive discrimination initiatives in favor of women.

- Adopting a women's quota in the parliamentary elections law and the municipal law.
- Adopting the principle of parity in administrative appointments, especially in first and second category jobs and in economic councils.
- Approving a female quota of no less than one-third on the boards of directors of joint-stock companies.
- Adopting the principle of allocating a quota for women in the leadership councils of trade unions and clubs.
- Adopting a law that protects politically active women, especially women candidates for political office, from exposure to violence, threats of violence, or defamation campaigns, including campaigns via means of electronic communication and media.

Fourth area of intervention: Integrating the gender equality approach into policies and legislative reform:

Topics:

- Adopting policies that are favorable to equal distribution of family, economic, social and political roles between men and women through:
 - Providing the opportunity for men to carry out family duties, such as introducing paternity leave and sick leave for children, from which the child benefits as well as the mother.
 - Encouraging the establishment of licensed nurseries for young children in all regions and regulating their activities.
 - Adopting legislation and decisions to organize the work of public administrations that require taking the interests of both genders into consideration in policies and programs

and in plans to promote integrity and combat corruption.

- Extending the legal period for registering newborns from one to five years and canceling newborn registration fees.

Fifth area of intervention: Implementing some legal texts that have not yet been executed by issuing their implementation decrees:

Topics:

- Establishing a special fund at the Ministry of Social Affairs to assist victims of crimes of domestic violence and sexual harassment.
- Establishing an account with the Ministry of Social Affairs to support and rehabilitate victims of crimes of human trafficking.
- Implementing the provisions of the Amendment Law to the Law of the Protection of Women and Family Members from Domestic Violence regarding assigning judges for examining complaints of crimes of violence to look into cases of domestic violence and establishing a unit specialized in crimes of domestic violence at the General Directorate of the Internal Security Forces.
- Applying sickness indemnities and maternity compensation stipulated in the Social Security Law.

Sixth area of intervention: Training law enforcement in the judicial and security agencies to put laws and their implementation decrees into practice, taking into account gender differences.

Second sub-objective: Strengthening mechanisms for implementing the principle of gender equality in policies and practices.

First area of intervention: Developing coordination mechanisms:

Topics:

- Policy formulation.
- Preparing legislative texts and seeking their adoption.
- Following up and evaluating the implementation of policies, legislation, and initiatives.
- Monitoring and evaluating the results of policies, legislation, and initiatives.
- Adopting clear coordination work structures.

Second area of intervention: Strengthening the network of Gender Focal Points and assigning units or committees for gender equality among decision-makers in ministries and public administrations that coordinate with the national mechanism.

Topics:

- Strengthening the position of Gender Focal Points within public administrations and ministries, and emphasizing the allocation of a portion of their functions to ensure gender mainstreaming into the administration to which they belong.
- Establishing committees with specific tasks for gender equality in ministries and public administrations.
- Encouraging municipalities to incorporate equality issues into their development programs.
- Encouraging public administrations to conduct periodic audits on their respect for gender equality requirements.

Third area of intervention: Developing monitoring and evaluation tools at the national mechanisms, such as developing the NCLW Lebanon National Gender Observatory.

Topics:

- Developing the work of the Lebanon National Gender Observatory.
- Developing the work of the Gender Barometer.

- Transferring the results of studies completed in the field of gender equality to parliamentarians and government officials, as well as to trade unions and parties.

Fifth Main Objective: The prevailing culture is based on the principles of human rights for men and women, while the means and outlets for its dissemination are aware of their responsibilities.

First sub-objective: Adopting the principle of gender equality instead of the principle of men's superiority over women in the normative rules regulating society.

First area of intervention: Working to integrate the principle of gender equality into the reference principles that are adopted in legislation and in the judiciary:

Topics:

- Expanding and deepening the study of human rights and related international agreements in universities, especially in law schools.
- Working to rid the laws of provisions that violate the principle of gender equality.
- Expanding the scope of work of the committees and departments concerned with preserving human rights in Parliament and in all administrations.
- Cooperating with spiritual guides to integrate human rights principles into sectarian legislation and the judicial rulings implementing them.
- Intensifying training for those responsible for applying security and judicial procedures to respect the rules of human rights and gender equality.
- Developing studies aimed at highlighting the roles played by women, but not men, in society.

Second area of intervention: Influencing popular behaviors.

Topics:

- Spreading knowledge among families about the bases of raising children on the principles of human rights, gender equality, and preserving human dignity.
- Disseminating knowledge about the biographies of women pioneers in science, arts, and humanitarian work.
- Disseminating knowledge of the economic value represented by the unpaid work that women perform in family care, housekeeping, and family businesses.

Second sub-objective: Disseminating images of men and women and their societal roles that embody the principles of gender equality and the culture of human rights:

First area of intervention: Education:

Topics:

- Encouraging families to pursue equality between sons and daughters.
- Adopting stereotypical images of men and women that recognize women in leadership roles and that are based on a positive understanding of masculinity and femininity.

Second area of intervention: Cooperation with institutions and influential figures in the fields of media, advertising, and social media in:

Topics:

- Conducting surveys, statistical, and analytical studies that address the conditions of women and issues of gender equality, that evaluate the results of policies and programs in place, and that disseminate the conclusions reached on the widest possible scale.
- Highlighting the pioneering roles played by

women by publishing specialized studies and CVs, and conducting interviews with influential women in society.

- Valuing the caring roles of men and encouraging them to carry them out.
- Highlighting the economic value of unpaid work carried out by women in urban and rural areas.
- Feminizing the names of positions, ranks, and titles when it comes to women, and using the feminine form next to the masculine form when women and men are both concerned.
- Highlighting women's success stories in various fields.

Public sector:

Council of Ministers Presidency

Central Statistics Administration

IDAL - Investment Development Authority of
Lebanon

Cooperative of Government Employees

Council for Development and Reconstruction

Council for South Lebanon

Civil Service Council

National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS)

General Directorate of State Security

National Institute of Administration

National Commission for Human Rights

National Commission for Lebanese Women

Ministry of Public Works and Transportation

General Directorate of Roads and Buildings

Ministry of Information

National News Agency

Ministry of Economy and Trade

Ministry of Environment

Ministry of Education and Higher Education

Department of Guidance and Counseling

General Directorate of Education

General Directorate of Higher Education

General Directorate of Vocational and Technical

Education

Center for Educational Research and Development

Ministry of Culture

Ministry of Interior and Municipalities

General Directorate of Internal Security Forces

General Directorate of Personal Status

General Directorate of Local Administrations and
Councils

General Directorate of General Security

General Directorate of Customs

General Directorate of Civil Defense

Ministry of Defense

Lebanese Army

Ministry of Agriculture

General Directorate of Cooperatives

Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute

Green Project Management

Ministry of Tourism

Ministry of Social Affairs

Ministry of Public Health

Ministry of Industry

Ministry of Energy and Water

Ministry of Justice

Ministry of Labor

Social Security

National Employment Agency	Family Planning Association in Lebanon
Ministry of Finance	Janiin Association
The Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan	Himaya Organization
Ministry of Displaced	himaya daeem aataa Association
Lebanese Parliament	Sama for Development Association
Lebanese Parliament Security	Sawa for Development Association
Beirut Fire Brigade	Justice Without Frontiers (JWF)
Economic and Social Council	Fifty Fifty Organization
	Fe-male Organization
Civil society organizations:	KAFA Organization
Institute of Progressive Women's Union	Fighters for Peace Organization
Young Women's Christian Association Beirut –	Madanyat for Equality Organization
YWCA	Mousawat Organization
Business and Professional Women in Lebanon	Yaduna Association
Lebanese Women Democratic Gathering (RDFL)	Mouvement Social
Cooperative Society for Supporting Women's	Permanent Peace Movement
Empowerment in Ghaziyeh and its vicinity	My Nationality, My Dignity - Destiny campaign
Lebanese Organization for Studies and Training	Women Association of Deir Al-Ahmar
Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections	Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network (EDAN)
(LADE)	League for Lebanese Women's Rights (LLWR)
Al Mabarrat Charity Association	Basma Group
Embrace Association	Forum for Development, Culture and Dialogue in
Human Environmental Association for Development	Lebanon (FDGD)
Southern Women's Home Association	ABAAD Organization
Beity Association	Lebanese Red Cross

Imam Al-Sadr Foundations

Adyan Foundation

René Moawad Foundation

Amel Foundation

Makhzoumi Foundation

The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against

Woman (LECORVAW)

Spotlight Center for Law and Human Rights

Educational, research, and university institutions:

General Secretariat of Catholic Schools in Lebanon

American University of Beirut

La Sagesse University

Holy Spirit University of Kaslik

Saint Joseph University

Lebanese University

Beirut Arab University

Sader & Company - Sader Publishers

Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies

Lebanese Center for Studies

Arab Institute for Women - Lebanese American

University

SEEDS for Legal Initiatives

Political parties:

Future Movement

al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya

Amal Movement

Progressive Socialist Party

Free Patriotic Movement Party

Lebanese Green Party

Syrian Social Nationalist Party

Communist Party

Azm Party

Lebanese Forces Party

Lebanese Phalange Party

National Bloc Party

Liberal Patriots Party

Sabaa party

Unions:

General Confederation of Lebanese Labor

Association of Lebanese Industrialists

Syndicate of Recruitment Office Owners in Lebanon

Lebanese Order of Medicine in Beirut

Syndicate of Social Workers in Lebanon

North-Lebanon Bar Association

Beirut Bar Association

Hospital Syndicate in Lebanon

Nurses Syndicate in Lebanon

Municipalities:

Union of Jabal Amel Municipalities

Union of Keserwan Municipalities

Beirut Municipality

Sawfar Municipality

Aley Municipality

**Institutions and organizations representing
the international community, donors, and
international non-governmental organizations**

UN Women

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO - The United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund

UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlement
Programme

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for
Refugees

UNIFIL - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

UNRWA - The United Nations Relief and Works
Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

USAID - United States Agency for International
Development

ESCWA - United Nations Economic and Social
Commission for Western Asia

OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights

International Alert

World Bank

GIZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale
Zusammenarbeit

ICMPD - International Centre for Migration Policy
Development

Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon

The British Embassy

The Canadian Embassy

Equality Now

Plan International

Search for Common Ground

The Lee Experience

Women's International League for Peace and
Freedom

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