

Public schools for non-Lebanese children to open on Monday

Joint Statement from the Ministry of Education, the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator, UNICEF and UNHCR in Lebanon

BEIRUT, 10 October 2019 – “All public schools in Lebanon will open their second shift on Monday 14 October, allowing around 150,000 non-Lebanese children to go back to school.”

The announcement from Minister Chehayeb came yesterday following a meeting he held with the UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Philippe Lazzarini, UNICEF Deputy Representative Violet Speek-Warnery and UNHCR Representative Mireille Girard, where clarification was made around the priority payment for the outstanding teachers' salaries. This will keep all children living in Lebanon at school this year.

Considering the recurring funding gap in public school's enrolment fees, amounting USD 8.6 million for the 2018/2019 scholastic year, participants to yesterday's meeting agreed to explore future alternative funding modalities from the UN and the international community. The shift towards an education system-wide support would better allow the Ministry to implement their vision for a sustainable and quality public education system, accessible to all school-aged girls and boys in Lebanon.

Since 2015, the international community has contributed on average of approximately USD 120 million a year to support the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in enrolment fees to the benefit 450,000 children living in Lebanon, including around 200,000 Syrian refugee children. The UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Lazzarini commented that “the United Nations value the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and international partners. We welcome the Ministry's sustained efforts in providing quality public education for all. Education plays a central role in society, protecting young children, including refugees, and preparing them for the future and their role as citizen of the world.”

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education in partnership with UNICEF, UNHCR and the international community are committed to providing all children living in Lebanon with access to education, a fundamental right for every child and confirmed that the United Nations and donor countries will join efforts to mobilize the needed funding for the fiscal deficit of last year.