STRENGTHENING NATIONAL CAPACITY FOR THE INTEGRATION OF
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES INTO DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES
IN COUNTRIES EMERGING FROM CONFLICT
PILOT CASE, LEBANON

UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA
(UN-ESCWA) AND UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
AFFAIRS (UN-DESA)

GUIDANCE NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN LEBANON

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCA	Common Country Assessment
CDR	Council for Development and Reconstruction
GN-DNSDS	Guidance Notes for Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Countries
IMC	Inter-Ministerial Committee
NDP	National Development Plans
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
UNCSD	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNESCWA	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

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1. EXECTIVE SUMMARY

This report addresses some of the gaps that Lebanon currently faces in sustainable development planning that ideally would take peacebuidling as its integral component. There is evidence that there have been discussions around the importance of enhancing planning that crosscuts different sectors in the country. At both official governmental and non-governmental levels, the prospect of taking part in the upcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) also referred to as Rio+20, learning from the experiences of other countries and ultimately working towards the integration of sustainable development practices in overall national development planning has been welcome. Moreover, Lebanon is signatory to several international conventions[2] that are seen to lead to the path of sustainable development. In this sense, it can be argued that Lebanon has relevant resources, however, they seem to be under-utilised. The following highlights some of these gaps and suggests some recommendations that the country can work on towards sustainable development.

The report includes gaps that relate to the following areas:

a. Political will and analysis of conflict

- Lebanon does not have a National Development Plan or a Poverty Reduction Strategy. This is ascribed to a main challenge articulated as 'lack of political will' resulting from a polarised political climate. The risk is that often such a challenge is taken for granted as a rigid unchangeable historical fact of life rather than as a variable, which a sound sustainable development plan can address.

b. Conceptual planning and prioritisation

- Since the end of the Civil War (1991), national planning in Lebanon has tended to prioritize the economic sector over the social and environmental. This trade-off means that the important domains of society and environment are overlooked and the risks are deceptive indicators of growth that are not equitable in real life and marginalise portions of the population, especially in regions outside of the capital.

- Building a consensual vision on the sustainable developmental priorities of Lebanon requires an integrative approach that crosses sectors, ministries and region. Lebanon's planning remains disparate and isolated with each ministry thinking of its objectives in separation to others.

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[2] For example, United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

- Lebanon's planning needs to develop along short-term, medium-term and long-term visions. Lebanon's plans in the post-war period have always addressed the short term and have tended to be 'reactive,' responding to crises.

- Lebanon does not incorporate contingency into its planning, especially in a setting where relapse into conflict as a result of external and internal factors is common. This means that when a crisis takes place, government has to often start all over again.

c. *Participation*

- Although there is acknowledgement of the need for national planning to be inclusive, on the ground, stakeholders work separately. The constituency of stakeholders remains exclusive to urban elites. Participation of stakeholders from Lebanon's regions can widen the ownership of plans and ensure an informed execution as well as long-term commitment and sustainability.

- Although Lebanon has a very vibrant civil society that has often worked with government, the private sector remains excluded. When there is participation, there is a lack of continuity and coordination as a result of institutional weaknesses.

d. *Institutional weakness and lack of coordination*

- There is a noticeable lack of coordination across and within institutions working on sustainable development (and other issues). Stakeholders seem to replicate each other's work often unaware that other individuals and organisations focus their work on similar matters. This applies to governmental as well as donor and international development agencies working in Lebanon.

- Lebanon has a depth and breadth of national strategies that have been developed in separate ministries in the last decade. These have considerable linkages and overlaps but are not necessarily available to stakeholders, nor have they been effectively integrated as a result of weak coordination.

- It is common practice for new governments in the post-war period to 'start anew' once they are in office rather than building on the work and outputs of previous ones. Strategies and plans that may have been initiated in previous governments are discarded. This creates a lack of continuity and sustainability both within ministries and across them.

These gaps are very interrelated and together hinder Lebanon's attempts towards sustainable development. The country hosts human and technical capacities that could be utilised more effectively and efficiently. The report

provides some recommendations that will contribute to overcoming some of these gaps.

2. INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on Lebanon as a pilot country under the Development Account Project ROA-105, 'Strengthening National Capacity for the Integration of Sustainable Development Principles into Development Strategies in Countries Emerging from Conflict.'[3] The first phases of the Lebanon pilot project focused on background research (UNESCWA-UNDESA 2011) and identifying key actors in governmental and non-governmental sectors that have been involved in developing national strategies in Lebanon. After that, a stakeholders' consultative meeting (Building Capacity to Utilize Sustainable Development Principles in National Policy-Making in Lebanon') was held in September 2011 to map out possible ways to enhance a focused and integrative approach for sustainable development and peace building in Lebanon; one that ensures wide participation.

The background research, interviews with different stakeholders and consultative meeting brought to the fore the urgent need for sustainable development in Lebanon. Almost two decades after the end of a devastating civil war (1975-1991), Lebanon faces many challenges in sustainable development and peacebuilding. These have been magnified as a result of a series of violent episodes that polarised the country. The Government of Lebanon has been repetitively preoccupied with immediate damages caused by the war, or, more generally, with reform that relates to 'states of emergency' as opposed to 'normal' policy-making. As a result, entire sectors have suffered neglect (social development, human rights, gender, the environment, public institutions), to the advantage of narrow recovery strategies that target the economy and reconstruction (UNESCWA-UNDESA 2011).

As a preliminary exercise, a group of stakeholders identified six interlinked priority areas that constitute broad objectives for sustainable development and peacebuilding in Lebanon. These are:

1. Reforming Institutions
2. Environmental Sustainability
3. Economic Development, Social Protection, and Regional Equity
4. Peace Development and Citizenship
5. Crisis Management
6. Security.

These six priorities require the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives that can only be productively managed through good governance, hence the prioritisation of 'reforming institutions.' It is noteworthy as well that issues related to 'security' and 'peace development' need to be prioritised in Lebanon as they cross-over all other priority areas and include human, environmental and social elements as articulated below.

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[3] The Project also works with Nepal and Liberia as two other pilot countries.

- Strategies for economic development in Lebanon have seen the reduction of debt, the increase of real growth and privatisation as priority needs to improve the Lebanese economy. This approach, however, has not proved inclusive to all echelons of society. Hence, a main priority area for economic development rests in a pro-poor approach that primarily (a) ensures a regional distribution of growth in Lebanon and (b) 'disaggregates growth to identify macro-micro linkages [gross domestic product (GDP) growth in relation to household income growth] and identify the sources of growth in terms of sectors, types of expenditure (consumption, investment, etc.), and increases in factor inputs (labour, capital) and their productivity and so on' (OECD 2006: 18).

- This approach necessitates linkages with social objectives that ought to work in tandem with economic policies. Priorities for social development in Lebanon include equitable access to services (health, social protection, employment and education) and fostering social inclusion and rights for vulnerable groups.

- Linkages also need to be made with environmental objectives as the environment has been one of the most neglected areas in the country, despite the alarming degradation it has underwent as a result of conflict, mismanagement and lack of accountability of resource use and management. Of high priority is enforce existing laws and regulations and to affect control and management of the environmental system, emplacing monitoring systems indicators on the environment and natural resources and a decentralisation of environmental and natural resource management.

a. Guidance Notes

The Development Account Project is also developing a substantive document, The Guidance Notes for Developing National Sustainable Development Strategies in Post-Conflict Countries (GN-DNSDS) (UNDESA 2011),[4] the draft material of which is being utilized to support sustainable development planning in each of the three pilot countries. The aim of the document is to 'address the dual challenge of peacebuilding and sustainable development, and, more specifically, provide guidance on how to approach sustainable development in post-conflict countries' (UNDESA 2011: 13). The strength of this document is that it deploys the newest trends in thought and literature on sustainable development in post-conflict settings and that it takes participation and iteration as its major frameworks. The latter point, especially, renders the document useful not only for post-conflict countries but also others who seek to refine or enhance their approaches to sustainable development. Moreover, the Guidance Notes aims to serve as a practical document (rather than an academic theoretical one) which can be easily utilized and which builds on already existing strategies and efforts in countries that wish to utilize it.

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[4] The document is currently in draft form and will be updated following the completion of the pilot exercises.

The Guidance Notes document is thus constructed along an explanation of five key elements. These elements are by no means exclusive but they are actively brought to the fore as each of them, according to the authors, comprises 'a building block for successful planning and strategy processes that combine sustainable development and peacebuilding' (UNDESA 2011: 1). The elements are listed and discussed in a separate chapter each:

1. Understanding the conflict.
2. Linking sustainable development and peacebuilding.
3. Managing sustainable development processes in post-conflict countries.
4. Building capacities for sustainable development in post-conflict countries.
5. Sequencing and prioritising policy reforms in post-conflict countries.

The Guidance Notes is written as a generic document that provides pointers towards ways of thinking and acting that would promote sustainable development and peacebuilding. The assumption – rightfully – is that there are some general common trends that can be extracted from the experience of conflict-affected countries which tend to face common identifiable challenges. In this sense, the document, as suggested by its title, provides 'guidance' and directives (as opposed to a set of rigid rules) to support sustainable development planning initiatives in countries affected by conflict.

The final chapter of the document is dedicated to identifying 'Entry Points for Sustainable Development in Post-Conflict Countries.' The idea here is that rather than starting from scratch, it is much more efficient to build on existing efforts. The chapter promises to focus on 'customizing generic guidance and adding details where such lessons learned and experiences exist' (UNDESA 2011: 79).

b. Application of the the Guidance Notes in Lebanon

As helpful as this document is, it can benefit from improvement in few areas to make it more applicable to Lebanon and countries like Lebanon that have not yet, for various reasons, embarked on developing a National Development Plan.

1. The document is too lengthy (116 pages) which makes navigating it a bit testing, considering its targeting audiences (different stakeholders in organizational cultures that do not allow the time and energy for such a long and dense document). Having said this, it is worth pointing out that the Executive Summary does a good job at summarizing the main points.

2. The final chapter, Chapter Seven, which addresses Entry Points to Sustainable Development is meant to be the moment at which the reader/practitioner is guided on 'where to begin.' This chapter, however, only addresses countries that already have either National Development Plans or Poverty Reduction Strategies. The chapter is not of much use for countries that have not developed these documents.[5] In relation to this, the document is useful only at

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[5] It must be mentioned that not much guidance is given for countries that have National Development Plans either, since they are too diverse in terms of experience: 'There is no specific guidance for NDPs since these plans vary widely and lessons learned are sparse. Refer to the generic guidance in Chapter 2 to 6 for guidance on how to mainstream sustainability principles into NDPs. Also, most of the specific guidance in the next chapter on PRSPs is also applicable to

the stage of developing strategy plans. 'There is no guidance on how to implement or integrate these elements at a later stage of the process' (UNDESA 2011: 79).

The Guidance Notes has been useful as a backdrop for the Project in pointing out the types of documents that could substitute for development plans (for example the Common Country Assessment and United Nations Development Assistance Framework reports) and ways to analyse the conflict and assess a country's (in this case Lebanon) capacities for sustainable development.

Indeed, the primary research and the stakeholders' consultative meeting indicated that various stakeholders are aware of and endorse sustainable development perspectives. There is evidence that there has been some thought and discussion around the importance of enhancing planning that crosscuts different sectors in the country. At both official governmental and non-governmental levels, the prospect of taking part in UNCSD (Rio+20), learning from the experiences of other countries and ultimately working towards the integration of sustainable development practices in overall national development planning has been welcome. Many gaps, however, persist and Lebanon needs to invest some effort in filling them.

The Guidance Notes Executive Summary was shared with stakeholders during the meeting and interesting discussions took place around some of its themes. Although some of the elements provide a constructive umbrella for thinking about sustainable development, it was more difficult to utilise this document for guidance on entry points for developing national sustainable development strategies. This report takes 'the key elements for sustainable development'[6] outlined in the Guidance Notes as a base for suggesting specific recommendations for sustainable development in Lebanon. It will thus outline some approaches that Lebanon can take as steps towards overcoming some of the persisting gaps. These recommendations are based on previous background research and face-to-face consultations with several partners and stakeholders that took place in August 2011 in addition to a stakeholders' workshop that addressed sustainable development in Lebanon in more depth

3. Element 1: Understanding the Conflict

NDPs and vice versa. These chapters should be read together' (UNDESA 2011:83). At times, as this extract shows, the document refers to itself in a circular way – chapter 2 refers to 7 and then when one gets to 7, one is referred back to 2.

[6] This report excludes a discussion of Element 5 (sequencing and prioritising policy reforms in post-conflict countries) as the model taken in the Guidance Notes is an evolutionist one that sees post-conflict development as a linear progression from 'stabilisation' to 'transition and recovery' to 'development' each usually taking a number of years (UNDESA 2011: 70). Although the authors do claim that a country can be at once in more than one phase, this categorization may prove more confusing than helpful for planners.

Note: This section of the Guidance Notes (pages 19 to 31) suggests ways to analyse conflicts and 'identify important conflict drivers and risk multipliers that have to be addressed to prevent relapses into conflict' (UNDESA 2011: 19).

The Guidance Notes identifies a set of generic inter-related challenges that are found in conflict-affected contexts and suggests that 'understanding and analysing these challenges is the starting point of any conflict- sensitive approach or action to prevent conflict' (UNDESA 2011: 1). These challenges, as noted in the Guidance Notes (ibid), more often than not, include one or a combination of the following:

1. Poverty, marginalisation, and vulnerability
2. Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources and environmental deterioration
3. Insecurity, militarization, and lawlessness
4. Societal divisions
5. Poor governance, corruption, and low capacity
6. Poor economic performance, limited fiscal resources, and disruption of infrastructures and public services
7. Regional and external risks

a. Gaps:

*   It is difficult to find a consensual outlook on the causes behind the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1991). However, there is an agreement on some of the deeply rooted factors that have historically played a role in perpetuating conflict. These include sectarianism, political confessionalism, failing to attain national reconciliation and poor institutional governance coupled with lack of accountability.

*   Unlike the roots of the conflict, there seems to be a more vibrant awareness of Lebanon's existing complex factors that comprise challenges to sustainable development planning. Stakeholders conceive of the mentioned challenges as a set of interconnected ones that feed into each other. The risk is that often some of these challenges are taken for granted as rigid unchangeable historical facts of life rather than handling them as variables,[7] which sound sustainable development planning can address.

b. Recommendations:

*   It is important to unpack the complexities of the challenges by breaking them down into root causes, destabilising causes and trigger factors (UNDESA 2011: 26). While some challenges may seem impossible to handle (such as some regional risks due to Lebanon's location in the region), others can be controlled through sustainable development planning (for example poor institutional governance).

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[7] See UNESCWA-UNDESA (2011) for more details on the challenges.

- Once challenges are broken down, the next step is to identify how they can be addressed and which institutions can address them. This facilitates the process of setting development policy objectives with clear timelines to identify how the challenges can be overridden.

- This means that planners need to distinguish between immediate, short-term objectives, medium term and long-term plans and outcomes.

4. Element 2: Linking sustainable development and peacebuilding

Note: This section of the Guidance Notes (pages 32 to 43) suggests ways to approach identified challenges by linking sustainable development and peacebuilding.

Sustainable development ensures a balance between three dimensions: economic, social and environmental sustainability (see Box 1).

Box 1: Conceptual domains of sustainable development

Economy: Economic sustainability means maximizing society's well-being, economic equity, and eradicating poverty through the creation of wealth and livelihoods, equal access to resources, and the optimal and efficient use of natural resources.

Society: Social sustainability means promoting social equity and uplifting the welfare and quality of life by improving access to basic health and education services, fulfilling minimum standards of security and respect for human rights, including the development of diversity, pluralism, and grassroots participation.

Environment: Environmental sustainability means the enhancement and conservation of the environment and natural resources for present and future generations.

(UNDESA 2011: 2)

'The key to balancing these three dimensions is to understand their linkages and interactions' (UNDESA 2011: 2). In other words, planners should minimize trade-offs among the dimensions or prioritizing one over the other. It is helpful to take two approaches into consideration:

1. To ensure that planning adopts pro-poor and inclusive economic development that links with the environment and safeguards it and its sustainability.

2. To ensure to link the environment to peacebuilding.

a. Gaps:

- Since the end of the Civil War (1991), national planning in Lebanon has tended to prioritize the economic sector over the social and environmental.

- Although the economy has been doing well in Lebanon, despite political upheavals since 2005, the case remains that economic growth has not been an equitable one. Tangible social and economic inequalities persist with remarkable regional disparities in services, ranging from infrastructure to health, education and standards of living (UNDAF 2010), poverty, which still affects up to 8 percent of the population (ibid: 10) and serious environmental degradation.

- A main obstacle to an integrative sustainable development approach in Lebanon is the lack of coordination between stakeholders in general, on one hand, and the designated official bodies, on the other. For example, much work is done by civil society organisations (such as environmental organisations), without coordinating with related ministries. It is also common for ministries not to coordinate with each other. Almost every ministry has a national plan, usually designed in isolation of other ministries. The result is either replication, which results in financial losses, or lack of synergy with regards to common objectives, which results in trade-offs that hinder sustainable development. For example, although the environment is a cross-cutting objective, environmental planning in Lebanon is reduced to one ministry, undermining environmental sustainability to the advantage of other, more highly prioritized objectives like economic ones.

- Although more recent efforts in planning show that within each domain, planners are attempting to take into account other sectors (for example, the recent National Social Development Strategy 2011 acknowledges the importance of the environment), planning remains confined sectorally with the environment remaining secondary to other national priorities set by planners in government.

b. Recommendations:

- Planners will need to strengthen the linkages between sectors (e.g., data exchange, coordinated planning) in order to produce plans that cross-cut different sectors without compromising on areas like the environment. This entails integrative planning that involves the participation of experts from different sectors.

- In order to develop inclusive strategies, planners need to adopt inclusive processes. The identification of stakeholders is vital in this process. Thus, the voice of both experts and representatives from regions of Lebanon

need to be represented, in addition to officials from concerned ministries, civil society, international and UN agencies and the private sector.

- Environmental objectives need to be foregrounded in sustainable development in Lebanon. This will help balance the more common focus on the economy and more recently social issues, and will help build public understanding of the complementarity between environment and other development priorities.

5. Element 3: Managing sustainable development processes in post-conflict countries

Note: This section of the Guidance Notes (pages 44 to 55) introduced key principles for managing sustainable development.

Although there aren't decisive instructions on how to manage sustainable development processes, the draft Guidance Notes describes some recommended approaches for peacebuilding that are relevant to the Lebanese context.

1. 'Sustainable development processes are based on **participation** and inclusion which in turn can support peacebuilding by (re)building the social contract between a divided citizenry and its government' (UNDESA 2011: 3). The advantage of participation is that it can render sustainable development strategizing more efficient, especially through decentralizing planning and management.

2. The second management principle is to include more **long-term thinking** into planning processes for mid-term goals and short-term actions. A long-term development vision can help ensure policy coherence and unify different actors to strive for a common goal (ibid).

3. The third principle is **iteration and improvement**. The aim is not to produce a 'fixed plan.' Rather, the emphasis ought to be on making progress towards sustainability goals. 'This means that sustainable development processes encompass analysis, formulation of policies and action plans, implementation, and regular review – in other words, they include feedback loops' (ibid). This allows a good opportunity to learn from the past.

a. Gaps:

- In recent years, ministries have made an effort to ensure wide participation in the process of developing their strategies. For example, the National Social Development Strategy (2011) involved a variety of stakeholders including civil society representatives from across the country. Planning, however, remains the prerogative of each ministry and often does not include a wide circle of participants. Moreover, planning is done in the capital and often excludes experts or stakeholders in other

regions of the country. The result is a lack of ownership of these strategies by the wider population, and potentially the strategies may not be sufficiently tailored to address localized development needs in some locations.

- National strategies in Lebanon have been shaped by a series of events that have led planners to adopt a reactive approach that tackles emerging crises. This has been at the expense of considering long-term policy impacts and objectives that would lead the country into the pathway of sustainability.

- Iteration for the sake of improvement requires continuity in the process of planning. Lebanon has a depth and breadth of national strategies that have been developed in separate ministries in the last decade. These have considerable linkages and overlaps but are not necessarily available to stakeholders, nor have they been effectively integrated, as a result of weak coordination.

- It is common practice for new governments in the post-war period to 'start anew' once they are in office rather than building on the work and outputs of previous ones. Strategies and plans that may have been initiated in previous governments are discarded. This creates a lack of continuity and sustainability both within ministries and across them.

- It is not uncommon in Lebanon for governments to change unexpectedly and suddenly, as a result of wars and internal conflicts. Often in these cases, interim governments are put in place in between elections. These shifts break continuities in strategies and governance.

b. Recommendations:

- Planners will need to expand the circle of participation in the process of planning. At the moment, official planning takes place within the ministries. Some ministries work with non-governmental organizations, research centres and other partners. It is recommended that these networks expand to include representatives from the different regions outside of the capital, more civil society groups and representatives from the private sector. This will ensure that the needs and concerns of all groups are better addressed, and will build a stronger sense of ownership and dedication to notions of sustainable development.

- To avoid planning that is only reactive and to promote proactive planning, it is important to take 'contingency' into consideration in a setting like Lebanon, where relapse into conflict and unwanted wars are not uncommon (for example the 2006 Israeli War, the 2008 sectarian clashes in Beirut, outbreaks of violence in Palestinian camps in Tripoli, and the various protests and sit-ins over the last few years, to name a few). Rather than throw away efforts, it is useful to collectively consider planning approaches that are flexible enough to absorb 'unexpected events.' This

approach means that planners will have to differentiate between immediate needs, medium term and long term ones.

- Since many strategies exist in the variety of ministries, compiling them and identifying the linkages across sectors would be a good first step to map out the efforts already in place, instead of having to start from scratch every time a new government is in place – a waste of human and financial resources. It is recommended that an inter-ministerial task force take this task on board (see below).

6. Element 4: Building capacities for sustainable development in post-conflict countries

Note: This section of the Guidance Notes (pages 56 to 68) addresses capacities that are often neglected and overlooked in sustainable development.

It is necessary to overcome specific obstacles to sustainable development. Of those, four main ones are considered in the Guidance Notes:

1. Lack of data and the capacities to collect, analyse, and feed them into the policy process are common shortfalls in conflict affected countries. These should be a priority, not just in terms of developing information systems but also in forging and strengthening networking and information sharing among the government and civil society (UNDESA 2011: 4).

2. A common consequence of conflict is weakened institutional linkages, both within government itself and between state and civil society. It is vital to strengthen cooperation within the government and with outside actors (ibid).

3. High aid flows and the multitude of different organisations and institutions active in post-conflict countries creates its own problems as it takes away ownership from national government. National governments need to take a more proactive role in determining how aid is allocated and managed and hold donors accountable for their actions (ibid).

4. Building and empowering visionary leadership can be a powerful tool for change, especially when they act as brokers of peace. Their ability to build coalitions around common desires to overcome conflict and crisis is critical (ibid).

a. Gaps:

- Lebanon has neither a National Development Plan nor a Poverty Reduction Strategy, both of which enhance a comprehensive integrative approach to sustainable development planning. While individual stakeholders agree on the necessity of having a National Development

Plan, the failure to develop and instate one is ascribed to a lack of political consensus and will.

- Rather than having a shortage of data,[8] in certain cases, Lebanon seems to have an abundance of data that are seen to be 'wasted.' Stakeholders believe that there is a culture of 'rendering reports and studies to the filing cabinet' rather than sharing and making them widely accessible for use.

- There is a noticeable lack of coordination across and within institutions working on sustainable development. Stakeholders seem to replicate each other's work often unaware that other individuals and organisations focus their work on similar matters. This applies to governmental as well as donor and international development agencies working in Lebanon. It must be noted that donor and UN agencies also suffer a lack of coordination and end up replicating work within and across organisations. This results in a waste of donor funds and national budget, lack of efficiency, and the weakening of the state by creating relations of dependency.

- There is the sense that individual 'visionaries' who 'think outside the box' do not have a place in the Lebanese political scene, which operates through relations of patron-client. This hinders attempts of change and consolidates alliances that replicate the current socioeconomic system.

b. Recommendations:

- It is necessary for Lebanon to reach political consensus on the necessity of developing a National Development Plan. Rather than taking for granted the 'impossibility' of political consensus in a climate of polarization, a few leaders from within can champion the effort to push for a plan and/or recommended mechanisms that lead to sustainable development. The 'either all or nothing' approach in terms of political consensus is not realistic in conflict afflicted contexts. So it is more advisable to manoeuvre within the system by identifying individuals in institutions that have a common vision and are in a position to push for change.

- Although the leadership of ministries changes with the change of governments, the technical experts and staff remain in place. It is important to create mechanisms of coordination that are sustainable and will survive shifts in leadership. One such recent attempt was the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) for social development. The creation of a similar technical team for sustainable development would facilitate coordination of a specialized multi-sectoral network. The Committee can

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[8] Some data in Lebanon is seen to directly impact on political stability and representation and is thus avoided, such as the census, which is seen to disrupt the Christian/Muslim balance. It has not been conducted since 1932. But other reports such as development indicators, consultant reports and studies, some statistics, strategy drafts, etc. are available, as reported by participants in the UNESCWA-UNDESA project (2011).

be hosted by either the Ministry of Environment or the PM's Office. This is to ensure its official standing across governments.

- Once a coordination mechanism is established, a conversation can carry on between different stakeholders who can then work towards common integrated objectives. This will also ensure that national government has a grasp of who is doing what (including international organisations).

- Political will for sustainable development can gradually be built by 'de-politicising' sustainable development objectives. This means building consensus inside the government as well as outside of it around the benefits of sound approaches to national planning.

7. Recommendations to advance sustainable development in Lebanon

- Lebanon does not yet have a National Development Plan or a Poverty Reduction Strategy, which are usually the most common entry points for developing sustainable development planning in post conflict countries, as suggested by the Guidance Notes. Of the recommended documents, Lebanon has CCA and UNDAF reports.

- Lebanon has the advantage of commitment to international conventions (see footnote 2). which require sustainable development approaches and safeguard the environment. These allow for important international linkages and sharing of experience.

- In addition, Lebanon boasts a multitude of strategies within ministries (UNESCWA-UNDESA 2011). [9] These strategies do not reference each other. Moreover, Lebanon hosts a wide variety of technical experts working both in government and outside it. Their knowledge and experience are bound to feed in and contribute to sustainable development planning.

- Rather than starting from scratch or replicating work which has already been done elsewhere, the most immediate task for Lebanon is to create an official mechanism for coordination that tackles the gaps within the same ministries and across them, as well as the weak communication between government and civil society, private sector and international and UN agencies.

- This mechanism can be done through a technical committee or a task force, formalised through the office of the PM and/or hosted in one of the concerned official bodies (Ministry of Environment or Council for Development and Reconstruction). This will ensure continuity of work

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[9] Examples include the 'Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform – Paris III' document 2007; Programme of Work of the Ministry of Environment of Lebanon 2010-2012; The National Social Development Strategy of Lebanon 2011, among others.

even when governments change, as the team will be a technical rather than a political one.[10]

- The Committee can then compile available strategies as well as a list of experts within ministries and without it (NGOs, research centres, donor and UN agencies, private sector representatives) so a network that can monitor strategy development and implementations can be established. It is crucial to highlight the importance of coordination not only in creating strategies but in the implementation of these strategies as well.

- There may be some need for financing the establishment and launching of the task force. Time will have to be allocated for a series of meetings to scope previous strategy work and to work towards a consensus on areas of priority. But it is expected that once the mechanism is in place, it can be part and parcel of the organigram of the government.

- Once the task force is in place and the strategies are compiled from each ministry, the team can meet over a 2-day workshop to identify common issues for sustainable development and begin to consider national priorities, especially once the political will for a National Development Plan is in place.

  The report suggests that there is a need for a wide network of stakeholders to be involved in sustainable development in order to ensure participation. These include the Government of Lebanon (for example PM's office, CDR and ministries),[11] the UN Lebanon country team, International donors working on Sustainable Development (for example, the EU, GTZ), civil society organisations (especially environmental organisations from different parts of the country) and the private sector. For practical reasons, however, due to the potential large number, it is advisable that the task force includes a smaller group that would ensure future communication with and involvement of the wider network.

- The task force can include: the PM's office, the CDR, Ministries of Environment, Energy and Water, Agriculture, Social Affairs, Economy and Trade, Finance, Education, ESCWA, UNDP, representatives of Environmental forum, representative of NGO forum, 2 representatives of the private sector.

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[10] Stakeholders involved in a similar exercise for social development (in which the IMC incorporated stakeholders from ministries, NGOs and other civil society members) found the process fruitful as it encouraged ownership of the social development strategy process, and allowed participants to share expertise and information and learning from others.
[11] There are 21 ministries in Lebanon: Agriculture, Culture, Displaced, Economy and Trade, Education, Energy and Water, Environment, Finance, Foreign Affairs and Emigrants, Industry, Information, Interior and Municipalities, Justice, National Defence, Public Health, Public Works and Transport, Social Affairs, Telecommunications, Tourism, Youth and Sport.

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