Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

Launch event of the Map of Risks and Resources

2016-07-11

I am delighted to be here at this launch event of the Map of Risks and Resources. Thank you very much to Prime Minister Salam for hosting us all today. We continue to recognise the efforts made by the Government of Lebanon in response to the Syria crisis and what that has meant for Lebanese communities. I also would like to reiterate my support for the Government's commitment in making the Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme such a success, a programme which was launched by UNDP and the Ministry of Social Affairs in 2013 and has grown exponentially to support vulnerable local communities throughout the country.

Since I arrived in Lebanon almost a year ago, I have been struck by the way in which the Lebanese people are showing, on a daily basis, their resilience, tolerance and generosity in the face of incredibly challenging circumstances, when at least a quarter of the country's population consists of refugees. Municipalities are on the frontline of coping with this crisis and face many challenges to do so. The consultative process outlined today for municipalities to map the risks and resources of their communities is a very positive step in ensuring that the local response fits what people really need most on the ground. The use of these maps by all stakeholders will lead to a more coherent response, working closely with both Government and local communities hand in hand to multiply our efforts, targeting the most urgent issues, most efficiently and effectively. The success of this process would not have been possible without the great work of Minister Derbas and his team at the Ministry of Social Affairs. I would like to congratulate staff who have led the workshops. I would also like to thank again the municipal councils involved in this process and praise the strong partnership between UNDP and MoSA.

Since the start of the Syria crisis, the UK has spent over £365m to support Lebanon's response. At the London Conference in February we re-confirmed our commitment to invest in long-term partnership between Lebanon and the UK by building stability, creating jobs and ensuring that no child in Lebanon is left without an education. The UK was also one of the first donors to fund the Lebanon Host Communities Support Programme in 2013, and we encourage fellow donors to do so as we continue our support. The UK supported intervention currently funds 90 projects. These projects will directly benefit over 253,000 Lebanese and 150,000 Syrian refugees in 49 key municipalities across Lebanon, in areas of high social tensions and vulnerability. The UK is now looking to scale up our support to municipalities alongside this continued work.

I am always pleased to hear about the positive impact that this programme has had so far on people's lives. I have heard about and visited several projects under this programme and it is heart-warming when people talk about what it has offered. In Bisserieh, over 4000 residents are benefitting from clean water helping to reduce environmental and health threats. Women working at the community kitchen are learning about safety and efficient processes for food production. I was told that in Sarafand the fishermen's cooperative is helping over 13,000 people with improved selling processes and business plans. Similarly in Akkar 150 farmers are now able to stay in their village and invest in their land.

Finally, you will have all heard about the results of the EU referendum in the UK. Although leaving the EU is a fundamental change for the UK, all other fundamentals remain in place. We continue to stand by your side supporting Lebanon's stability, security and prosperity. Under this programme we will continue working with partners to deliver improved municipal and basic services needed to meet the growing needs in the most affected municipalities. Once again I would like to thank UNDP and MOSA for making this project a great success and we are proud to be supporting it.'

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/launch-event-of-the-map-of-risks-and-resources