

Joint Local and International NGO Statement for the LCRP Launch

For delivery by Father Paul Karam, president of Caritas Lebanon

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As we approach the 4th anniversary of the crisis in Syria and the conflict continues to rage, Lebanon stands at a critical point. Lebanese infrastructure and public services are under extraordinary strain, poor and vulnerable communities in Lebanon are paying the price, and refugees are at the end of their ability to cope.

Supporting Lebanon now can make the difference both for the millions of people in need in Lebanon and for ensuring that Lebanon's stability is maintained.

We are today launching the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan asking for 2.14 billion dollar to support critical humanitarian and stabilization programs. However, the current response is shockingly under-funded --- the 2014 appeal is still only 46% funded as of early December. The NGO community, including both national and international NGOs, is extremely concerned about diminishing funding in the face of growing needs of refugees and host communities alike.

It's time for Lebanon's generosity to be matched by greater contributions from countries around the world, so that we can help save lives through the provision of food, shelter, water, and access to healthcare, enable children to go to school, and support livelihoods opportunities for vulnerable families, while re-enforcing communities, local NGOs, Government institutions and municipalities.

Local services and Non-Governmental Organizations in Lebanon will carry the responsibility for meeting the needs of both refugees and those disadvantaged in the local population for many years to come. Local organizations must be supported in developing greater autonomy, building on strong local knowledge to expand sustainable service provision that will address the long term needs of vulnerable individuals, families and communities.

It is essential to uphold the right of all civilians fleeing the conflict in Syria to seek international protection, and the governments of countries neighboring Syria cannot be expected to shoulder this responsibility on their own. Other governments can help not only with increased funding, but also by collectively committing to provide resettlement or humanitarian admission to the most vulnerable 5% of the refugee population by the end of 2015.

Ultimately, the only way to prevent further terrible human suffering for years to come is by ending the crisis. Therefore, in closing, we urge the international community to redouble efforts to find a political solution to the conflict.