**Call for Submissions:**

**Thematic report to the UN Human Rights Council "Eradicating poverty in a post-growth context: preparing for the next Development Goals"**

**By the Lebanese Center for Human Rights – CLDH, Lebanon**

***Has your government designed measurements of social progress that complements GDP, in accordance with target 17.18 of the SDGs? If so, what alternative indicators were designed and how? Have such measurements accounted for unpaid care, reproductive, and household work and, if so, how? Which mechanisms, if any, have been established to increase accountability towards improving the performance of the State according to such indicators? Please share any lessons learned from the use of such alternative measurements of progress and associated monitoring mechanisms.***

Lebanon faces substantial challenges in instituting comprehensive measures that complement GDP and meet SDG targets. Regarding unpaid care, reproductive, and household work, Lebanon has yet to adopt distinct policies that comprehensively account for these aspects within its social progress indicators. Additionally, consistent accountability mechanisms and monitoring frameworks linked to alternative indicators remain inadequately developed in Lebanon.

***Which measures have been adopted, if any, to ensure that growth primarily benefits the bottom 40 per cent of the population, in accordance with SDG target 10.1? Have other tools to assess progress towards the reduction of inequalities been designed and implemented?***

Addressing SDG target 10.1 and devising strategies to ensure that growth benefits the bottom 40 percent of the population has been difficult to implement in Lebanon. In light of the socio-political obstacles and ongoing economic crisis, economic disparities among social classes have widened, hindering inclusive growth.

***Which obstacles did the State encounter in its search for development pathways not dependent on economic growth, consistent with its economic sovereignty and the prioritization of the well-being of the population?*** ***Which enabling international environment should be established in order to encourage the search for such alternative development pathways?***

Lebanon continues to face numerous internal obstacles in its pursuit of alternative development pathways that are independent of economic growth. Since 2019, the country has grappled with political instability that has hindered substantial development strategies and reforms. Furthermore, despite 12 attempts, the Lebanese parliament has failed to elect a new president since the incumbent's mandate ended in October 2022. The absence of a fully functional presidency has halted the formation of a new government capable of addressing urgent well-being concerns and effectively devising development plans. Similarly, Lebanon has faced severely deteriorating economic conditions, characterized by high inflation, accumulating debt, and a depreciating currency and purchasing power. Such factors are intrinsically linked to the challenge of pursuing development pathways not solely dependent on traditional economic growth, as the country has been focused on immediate concerns and financial stabilization. This focus has diminished resources and sidelined investments in long-term development projects that do not generate immediate revenue. Moreover, finding alternative development pathways that prioritize the well-being of the Lebanese population constitutes a challenge due to decades of underinvestment in infrastructure. In addition to these challenges, Lebanon has historically been dependent on foreign aid, rendering it difficult to move towards self-sustaining development pathways due to aid dependency, limited autonomy in decision-making, and vulnerability to geopolitical changes. On an external level, Lebanon continues to be embroiled in regional conflicts, which disrupts stability and strains social services.

To encourage the search for such alternative development pathways in Lebanon, international donors must ensure that financial assistance comes with fewer conditionalities and dependencies and accounts for Lebanon’s unique socio-economic context and long-term goals. This would help Lebanon secure the required resources to invest in sustainable development and move towards economic sovereignty and diversification. Equally important, Lebanon requires technical assistance and capacity building, most notably in sectors like renewable energy, agriculture, and technology, to foster alternative development models. Lebanon could also receive access to expertise and resources through collaborations on development initiatives with international organizations, NGOs, and neighboring countries. Finally, fostering a stable regional environment is paramount for the success of Lebanon’s development efforts.

***The way societies conceive of work, relate to the environment, and finance their economies and welfare systems locks them into growth-oriented economic models. What measures should be taken to overcome such growth dependencies in each of these areas? And how can human rights guide efforts to overcome such self-reinforcement?***

Solely relying on growth-oriented economic models can have drastic impacts on the environment, social equality, and long-term sustainability. To overcome growth dependencies and foster sustainability and human rights, policies related to work must promote the diversification of employment and limit reliance on a few sectors, in turn encouraging innovation in various industries such as renewable energy and technology as well as minimizing vulnerability to economic downturns. Moreover, the education curriculum must be revamped and updated to cater to advancements and prioritize skill-building. Such changes would better prepare graduates to work in sustainable industries and reduce the dependency on sectors linked to economic growth. On an environmental level, countries must implement policies that support sustainability. Such initiatives could include focusing on renewable energy sources, waste reduction, and reforestation. When financing their economies and welfare systems, states must provide adequate support to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and incentivize investments in sustainable infrastructure and green technologies. It is also fundamental to ensure universal access to essential services such as healthcare and education to shift the focus away from growth-driven welfare systems. Similarly, social safety nets must be strengthened to ensure that vulnerable populations’ needs are met irrespective of economic growth. On December 15th, 2023, the Lebanese parliament passed an unprecedented law aimed at creating a comprehensive pension system for private sector workers and restructuring the National Social Security Fund. This legislative step represents a crucial social and economic reform for the country. Thus, it is fundamental to ensure that the law is properly implemented and leverage this foundation to further enhance and develop a robust social protection system.

Human rights principles must be placed at the core of any effort undertaken to overcome growth dependencies, most notably participation and inclusion, non-discrimination, and accountability and transparency. First, all development plans must cater to the needs of marginalized groups, rendering it essential for the latter to be engaged in any decision-making process. Moreover, policies must be designed without discrimination, ensuring that all individuals and groups have equal access to opportunities and resources. Finally, states must govern transparently and devise accountability mechanisms to monitor and halt human rights violations or inequities in the implementation of alternative development pathways.