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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The title of my presentation is “Lebanon’s Path to Recovery, Overcoming the Chaos and Building a Brighter Future.”

Lebanon is a nation that has endured the worst trials of human adversity in the past five years, political instability, economic collapse, security risks and warfare. This was preceded by a decade of regional turmoil, particularly the previous repercussions of the Syrian war and concerns about the current coup; on the other hand, the difficulties in the public finances in terms of the budget deficit and worsening public debt and its service imposed an immense burden. Cumulative layers of tragedy and hardship have been inflicted on Lebanon. The unprecedented economic and financial crisis, the socio-economic and political unrest, the consequences of the Covid pandemic, the catastrophic explosion of the Port of Beirut, and the recent Israeli atrocities, which have once again tested the limits of the nation’s endurance. Yet, amid this persistent chaos, the trauma of destruction, displacement, and loss, the Lebanese people continue to exhibit extraordinary resilience and strength, which binds them together across divides.

First, governance: a path to stability and prosperity for Lebanon

Lebanon’s future stability and recovery hinge on a transformative overhaul of its governance and administrative systems. This reform must be guided by a clear strategic vision and deliberate actions aimed at reshaping Lebanon’s political and administrative institutions to make them functional, efficient, transparent, and accountable to all citizens. Crucial steps include:

1. Electing a unifying president to strengthen constitutional institutions;
2. Forming a capable and independent government;
3. Restructuring public institutions and civil service;
4. Fostering transparency, accountability, and combating corruption;
5. Leveraging technology and digital transformation for efficient governance; and
6. Developing strategic objectives for sustainable growth reform.

Second, the impact and costs facing a nation in ruins

According to the United Nations data as of November 14, more than 30 ancient towns and villages on the border were attacked by the Israelis, and more than 12% of the buildings were damaged or destroyed. According to the World Bank estimates, the loss of infrastructure alone stands at USD 8.5 billion, over 47% of Lebanon’s 2023 GDP. The destruction is compounded by the displacement of over 1.2 million people, over 20% of the population,

exacerbating Lebanon's already dire humanitarian situation with many facing an uncertain future in a country grappling with the world's largest per capita refugee crisis.

Lebanon's economy, already debilitated by years of political instability and the collapse of its banking system, is now grappling with additional crippling challenges. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which are the backbone of the economy, have been particularly hard hit. The unemployment rate is projected to exceed 32.6% by the end of 2024; in addition, the agricultural, commercial, and tourist sectors are mostly damaged. The housing sector has suffered devastating losses amounting to \$3.4 billion, with over 100,000 homes either destroyed or severely damaged. Meanwhile, critical sectors such as education, healthcare, and the environment have collectively sustained losses of at least \$5.1 billion.

Adding to these challenges is the strain caused by the ongoing Syrian refugee crisis. Lebanon hosts the largest per capita population of refugees in the world, with approximately 1.5 million Syrians seeking shelter within its borders.

This exacerbates a severe contraction that has seen the real GDP plummet by over 34% since 2019. Poverty levels, already affecting over 80% of the population, are expected to rise further, leading to heightened social unrest and increasing vulnerability across the nation.

As for the financial crisis, the Lebanese central bank has already depleted over 400 million in foreign currency reserves in October alone to stabilize the Lebanese pound. These reserves now stand at just 10.3 billion pounds and continued withdrawals from dollar deposits are expected to further strain the nation's finances.

Third, reconstruction: a path for productive sustainable development

Reconstruction in Lebanon must go beyond simply rebuilding what has been destroyed; it presents a unique opportunity to rethink the country's approach to development, focusing not only on restoring infrastructure but also on creating a sustainable and resilient future. This process will demand sustainable resources, time, and political will. The key priority should be rebuilding essential infrastructure devastated by Israel, including roads, bridges, schools, and hospitals.

Lebanon must simultaneously invest in modernizing its energy grid by changing to renewable energy resources such as solar and wind power. Similarly, strengthening the healthcare system is critical for securing a social safety network.

The current crisis offers a chance to transition from a rentier model to a more productive economy driven by innovation, technology, and sustainability. Beyond domestic reforms, Lebanon must actively seek regional and international partnerships to aid its economic recovery.

Fourth, pillars for rebuilding Lebanon's future

That should be carried out through a comprehensive and visionary approach that aims to learn lessons from the past while capitalizing on Lebanon's strengths and comparative advantage. This transformation from the dominant service economy to a more diversified

scheme requires its services to be directed towards synergizing other industrial, agricultural, and knowledge sectors. The following structural transformation pillars should be considered:

1. Investing in Lebanon's small and medium enterprises and social entrepreneurship for regional and global collaboration;
2. Boosting industrialization and knowledge economy;
3. Reforming the Lebanese banking sector and macroeconomic framework;
4. Enhancing the role of microfinancing and empowering women; and
5. National reconciliation and social cohesion to heal the wounds.

In conclusion, Lebanon's journey towards recovery is undeniably challenging, yet the resilience and determination of its people shine as a beacon of hope while the destruction caused by the Israeli war, actually atrocities, has left lasting scars. Lebanon's true strength lies in its citizens, their unwavering spirit, ingenuity, and resolve to rise above diversity. By prioritizing governance reform, economic revitalization, and social reconciliation, Lebanon has the potential to rebuild and emerge stronger, more united, and more prosperous than ever before.