

International Monetary Fund (IMF) Negotiations

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Resuming immediate negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reach an agreement on an assistance plan based on a short and medium-term rescue program that departs from the recovery plan after updating it; proceeding with the implementation of reforms in all fields that have become well-known, based on the pressing priorities and on what serves the general interest; working on completing the economic plan and committing to its implementation with the Central Bank once approved by the government.

Gender asks

Any financial package from the IMF should:

- Facilitate national investment in social protection systems that correct gender gaps and strengthen protection for both formal and informal workers.
- Ring-fence spending on education and health to protect social gains and to stem the outflow of women from the economy.
- Fast-track pension reform to address protection gaps.
- Include measures that promote women's participation in labor market and female entrepreneurship, and support protection schemes for women informal and domestic workers especially those in the agricultural sector and working in family-owned enterprises.

Prior to the economic crisis women's labour force rate was two thirds less than men:¹



29% VS 70%

UN Women has estimated that will have **dropped to 26.4% at the end of 2020, due to the crisis.**²

Source 1: CAS, 2019.
Source 2: UN Women, 2020.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Devising a plan to reform the banking sector and to restructure it where needed; revitalizing economic activity to contribute to funding the private sector with favorable interest rates while prioritizing the safeguard of the rights and money of depositors.

Gender asks

Any restructuring of the banking sector should:

- Provide special measures for the retention of women in the banking sector. Where layoffs are made, provide access to training/capacity building to improve skills that could be transferable to other sectors including digital training.
- Address gender barriers to ensure women's equal access to financial services – including loans and credit lines.
- Encourage Central Bank to adopt circulars that increase the percentage of loans to women-owned small and medium enterprises; and to increase the number of women-owned deposit accounts.

Women represent

**48% OF THE
BANKING SECTOR
WORKFORCE.**



Source: UN Women, 2020.

French Initiative and Lebanon's Reform, Reconstruction, and Recovery Framework

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Valuing the French initiative and committing to all its provisions in a transparent manner and to the recommendations of the 3RF mechanism; proceeding with the updating of and the development of the financial recovery plan; completing the economic reform policy that Lebanon presented during the CEDRE Conference after reviewing the list of projects falling under the Capital Investment Programme (CIP); benefiting from the recommendations of the McKinsey Economic Report, particularly with regards to supporting the productive sectors in preparation for transiting from a rentier economy to a productive economy to achieve social justice.

Gender asks

- Promote women's meaningful and equal participation and representation in all meetings and processes related to the French initiative/CEDRE.
- All service delivery delivered under the 3RF (protection, employment etc) should benefit men and women equally. Careful monitoring of LFF and 3RF financed programmes should be undertaken to understand its gendered impact (if it positively or negatively affects women's) and include sound gender indicators and frequent reviews.
- CEDRE reform agenda to integrate economic asks made throughout this analysis.

Historically, women's engagement in political decision-making in Lebanon has been very low, or fully absent.



Border Crossings and Control

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Working on closing illegal border crossings and strengthening control at legal ones through the installation of modern and developed scanners.

Gender asks

- Support to the security sector should include specific monitoring and interventions to the GS border control and other border related authorities to ensure safe passage from the Lebanese side of the border, as well as monitor and address human and sex trafficking; this support must include sensitization and capacity building on issues of sexual and gender-based violence.
- Support women to legalize their personal and civil documentations and allow safer freedom of movement.

INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE PERPETRATED AGAINST REFUGEES, particularly women and girls, at the Syria/ Lebanon border continue to be documented.



Source: Amnesty International, 2021

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Curbing tax evasion; amending the Public Accounting Law; expediting the issuance of new legislation for Customs; enacting the Integrated Strategy for Customs Reforms along with its executive program; enacting legislation on the modernization of real estate transactions.

Gender asks

Reforms toward taxation laws should:

- Address gender discrimination in the tax law.
- Reduce taxes on goods and services that promote substantive gender equality and higher social welfare, such as reproductive health.
- Create tax incentives for companies that hire 30% and more women in managerial positions.

Lebanon's tax system includes many **EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT BIASES AGAINST WOMEN.**

Under the tax code, married men are entitled to a deduction for dependent spouses and up to five children. Married women can only claim this deduction if their husband dies or is incapacitated.



Source: ANND, 2019.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Working on finalizing the 2022 general budget with a focus on the inclusion of reform provisions relating to public finances.

Gender asks

The 2022 budget should, at minimum, include the following:

- Guaranteed commitment to not decrease spending on health, education, and social protection.
- Pilot gender responsive budgeting (GRB).¹
- Provide a budget for the work of the National Commission for Lebanese Women.

1 A gender-responsive budget is a budget that works for everyone (women and men, girls and boys) by ensuring gender-equitable distribution of resources and by contributing to equal opportunities for all. It involves analyzing government budgets for their effect on genders and the norms and roles associated with them, and ensuring budgets respond to the priorities of women and men.

**NO GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING
PROCESS IN PLACE IN LEBANON.**



2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Orienting the current subsidy policy and restricting it to those deserving it among resident Lebanese nationals; transiting into a social policy capable of filling the social gaps.

Gender asks

- Where targeted subsidies are maintained, prioritize subsidies to address issues of period poverty (whether the import of finished products, or the raw materials for products to be produced in Lebanon).

The UN estimates that the cost of sanitary products has had an overall increase of around

320%

since October 2019, leading to unsafe menstrual hygiene practices and exacerbated health risks for women and girls.



Source: UN, 2021.

The Judiciary and its Independence

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Completing the appointment of members of the Higher Judicial Council; completing the pending judicial appointments; seeking to enact a law on the independence of the judicial authority; expediting trials to achieve justice; paying attention to the situation of prisons.

Gender asks

Address women's access to justice issues including:

- Expedite cases related to violence against women and girls.
- Pay due attention to the situation and needs of women in prison.
- Provide compulsory training on gender and women's rights, especially on SGBV and SH, as part of the Institute of Judicial Studies curriculum, for judges, authorities, and institutions, including the police and prosecutors.
- Ensure 50/50 hiring of judges, including in high-ranking positions.
- Increase the hiring of female police and security personnel, ensuring improved working conditions for women in law enforcement and security.
- Prioritize expansion of specialized legal aid/access to justice in rural areas and to displaced populations.

Although women outnumber men in the judiciary at around 56%,

FEMALE JUDGES ARE UNDERREPRESENTED IN HIGH-RANKING POSITIONS



Source: UN ESCWA, 2019.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Issuing the implementation decrees of the laws in force and following up on the implementation of relevant legislation, including those related to the Public Procurement Law upon its entry into effect; competing the appointment of members of the National Anti-Corruption Commission; activating the work of control and oversight bodies and enabling them to exercise their role; completing the necessary measures to sign the contract on the financial forensic audit of the accounts of the Central Bank and proceeding with the necessary measures to carry out a financial audit of the accounts of ministries, independent councils, funds and public institutions, and taking the necessary measures in this regard based on the law passed by Parliament.

Gender asks

Anti-corruption efforts should:

- Use social audits on women's access to services addressing sexual extortion as a form of corruption
- Implementation of regulations to address sexual extortion.
- Ensure complaint mechanisms are accessible to women and linking them to referral mechanisms.
- Ensure fair representation of women in all anti-corruption and oversight bodies, including the national anti-corruption commission.
- Ensure that decrees are issued to implement the public procurement law encourage gender responsive procurement.

Women remain the primary caretakers of the family and are regularly confronted with

CORRUPTION

WHEN DEALING
WITH EDUCATION,
HEALTH AND
OTHER PUBLIC
SERVICES.



2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Increasing power hours and securing electricity for citizens as soon as possible; working on diversifying energy sources in the lead-up to prioritizing natural gas and renewable energy; completing the implementation of the electricity plan along with the related reforms and updating it; building power plants based on the country's needs with the participation of the private sector; completing the Floating Storage Regasification Unit (FSRU) Project; prioritizing the continuation of the provision of drinking water to all Lebanese regions; treating sewage problems; working on the preparation of and issuance of the implementation decrees for the Water Law; launching the second licensing round for oil drilling in Lebanese territorial waters that has been temporarily suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic; pursuing oil exploration operations in Lebanese territorial waters.

Gender asks

Reforms to the energy sector should:

- Subsidise solar power packages for women's shelters and other critical protection services.
- Promote women's employment in the energy sector as/if jobs are created in sustainable energy and promote women's entrepreneurship in the green and circular economy.
- Ensure that women are equally represented in political decision-making bodies as well as in government-appointed bodies and institutions that are governing the use of energy sources.
- Ensure that decrees issued to implement the public procurement law encourage gender responsive procurement.

The labor code

PROHIBITS WOMEN

FROM WORKING IN CERTAIN OCCUPATIONS



2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Strengthening the role of women as a key and active partner in public life; enshrining women's right to equality and eliminating all forms of discrimination against them and empowering them economically.

Gender asks

There is significant work to be done on ensuring women's active engagement in public life and the right to equality and the end of discrimination. The recommendations focus primarily on the election:

- Make sure that the Supervisory commission for Elections that will be reappointment soon has proper female representation.
- Enact gender quota in the parliamentary electoral law as well as in the municipal law.
- Ensure zero tolerance for VAW against women candidates – it should be a common priority to ensure we address violence against women in politics to help them run on an equal platform to men (zero tolerance for hate speech on social media, traditional media, zero tolerance for physical violence, harassment, etc). with clear redress for the persons who breach this regardless of their position.
- Secure female representation in high public appointed officials.

Women make up

**4% OF THE
CURRENT CABINET.**

They occupy less than

**5% OF PARLIAMENTARY
SEATS, AND MAKE
UP LESS THAN 6% OF
MUNICIPAL COUNCILORS.**

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Pursuing the measures aimed at containing the COVID-19 pandemic; intensifying the National Vaccination Campaign to reach high immunity levels in society; prioritizing the management of the problems that have hit the health sector, including the availability of medicines and medical supplies and the emigration of medical and nursing personnel; developing medical care services through the improvement of infrastructure in public hospitals and primary medical care centers; supporting medical personnel and developing their capacities; boosting investments in medical IT services; working on orienting health systems into protective and early medical care; curbing inequality in access to medical care in the lead-up to providing complete medical coverage.

Gender asks

Health reforms should work to:

- Ensure women's timely access to necessary and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services during the crisis, such as emergency contraception and pre and post maternal healthcare, and mental health services.
- Make the ISF 1745 hotline on domestic violence free of charge and broaden the scope of it to cover other forms of violence against women; ensure linkages for women and girls' access to critical health services such as clinical management of rape, and mental health support.
- Provide affordable feminine health and hygiene products and sanitary pads to all women equally and support their local production.

Specific women's health issues include

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH,

MATERNAL HEALTH, SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, AND MENTAL HEALTH.



2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Ensuring a normal academic year for schools and universities; ensuring the access of educational institutions to the fundamentals needed for their continuity; reviving, equipping, and guaranteeing the quality of education in public schools; following up on the situation of students, especially those coming from the neediest families; following up on the five-year plan especially with regards to the development of curriculums in order to refine the quality of education; strengthening the role of the Lebanese University; strengthening professional and technical education programs and linking them to the labor market in order to secure a Lebanese workforce that is capable of contributing to the economic recovery.

Gender asks

Educational reforms should work to:

- Mainstream gender in education materials across national curricula and in classrooms. Address gender bias and stereotypical images of both men and women and their relevant social roles in curricula and textbooks.
- Prevent and fight bullying in schools (including cyberbullying) and provide trainings to teachers and school staff on how to raise awareness/address bullying cases.
- Promote women in STEM.

Lebanon has high levels of gender equality in education, with a gender gap in educational attainment at

**0.96, RANKING 113
OUT OF 156 GLOBALLY.**



Source: WEF, 2021.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Adopting urgent measures to develop the national economy based on specialization in production; supporting the institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Industry (Industrial Research Institute, Lebanese Accreditation Council, Lebanese Standards Institution) and activating their role to refine the quality of local industrial production and to ensure a high level of competitiveness for Lebanese products; incentivizing industrial sectors and Lebanese medical products; incentivizing the new industries of imported products that are not produced in Lebanon and working on producing local alternatives in sufficient quantities, quality and prices.

Gender asks

Reforms related to industry should:

- Promote women's employment in the industrial sectors.
- Promote women's work in non-traditional industrial sectors, such as paint production, welding, plumbing, digital economy professions, transport etc.
- Abolish legislation banning women from operating heavy machinery in some factories.
- Adopt gender responsive procurement measures, which seek to ensure the sustainable selection of services, goods or civil works that considers the impact on gender equality and women's empowerment, such as mandating a minimum quota for the inclusion of women-owned and led businesses in public procurement.

Very few women appear to be employed in the industry, with

**WOMEN MAKING UP
ONLY AN ESTIMATED**

**7% OF THE TOTAL
JOBS IN THIS SECTOR.**



Source: CAS, 2019.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Supporting all agricultural sectors; incentivizing agricultural orientation; cooperating with donor institutions, organizations and countries; activating the work of cooperatives; supporting agricultural programmes and projects; developing the fishing sector.

Gender asks

Reforms related to agriculture should:

- Include agricultural workers under the labour and NSSF law and ensure careful monitoring of labour violations in the agricultural sector.
- Recognize the scope of rural women's involvement in agro-food value chains, including their involvement in crop production, livestock and fishing activities as agricultural producers in their own right, and improve rural women's access to finance, land, agricultural production inputs, extension services and participation in decision making in rural areas.

Women account for up to

**43% OF THE
AGRICULTURAL
WORK FORCE.**

Yet, women are paid

**TWO-THIRDS TO
ONE-HALF LESS
THAN THEIR
MALE COUNTERPARTS.**



Sources: FAO, 2021.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Developing an integrated plan for sustainable development with the participation of civil society, universities, and the private sector; protecting water sources from all types of pollution in light of a new vision; affirming the implementation of the Litani River and Qaraoun Lake Pollution Management Law; developing a national strategy for the management of solid waste and an integrated strategy for the management of quarries and strengthening integrity in this field; supporting the green economy; amending the Hunting Law in a way that contributes to the protection of biological diversity; committing to combating air pollution and to the Paris Climate Accords.

Gender asks

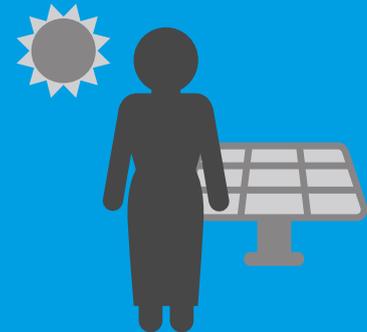
Reforms related to the environment should:

- Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels at the national and local level. This includes ensuring women are represented on different environmental management bodies, and that as water and other initiatives are rolled out, municipal actors engage with male and female users to address issues of access and quality.
- Support female led enterprises to invest in and develop sustainable development solutions.

In Lebanon,

**WOMEN PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN
MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES**

**ON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEVELS
AND ARE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECTED BY
ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION.**



2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Rehabilitating and equipping the fixed telephone lines and mobile networks to secure the continuity of telecommunications services (calls and internet); developing up a reform vision for the sector that takes into consideration partnerships with the private sector (PPP); working on issuing the implementation decrees for Law No. 431/2002 on the organization of the telecommunications sector; appointing members of the telecommunications regulatory body; activating the Liban Telecom Company along with the necessary structural and radical reforms in the sector; unifying services and complementarity between the different mobile, fixed line, internet and mail sectors in order to improve the quality of the offered services for citizens at competitive rates.

Gender asks

Reforms on telecommunication should seek to:

- Ensure women's representation in the telecommunications regulatory body.
- Encourage actors in the telecommunications sector to monitor and address gender gaps in mobile phone and internet access and usage.

According to the International Telecommunication Union there is a

14% GENDER GAP

**IN INTERNET ACCESS ACROSS
THE MENA REGION.**



Source: ITU, 2021.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Protecting press freedom; committing to the implementation of laws and seeking to modernize them to be on par with the developments; activating the role of the National Media Council after the reconsideration of its specialization and formation mechanism.

Gender asks

Reforms related to information should:

- Protect women subjected to harassment and hate speech on social media, especially those working in politics, while preserving the freedom of speech.
- Prosecute those enacting violence against journalists.

Physical and online violence

DISPROPORTIONALLY AFFECTS WOMEN

AND LIMITS THEIR ABILITY
TO CONTRIBUTE TO
FREE PRESS AND
MEDIA.



Source: UN Women, 2021.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Seeking to complete a comprehensive transport plan; adopting partnerships between the public and private sectors and accompanying the technical, administrative and financial developments in this regard; taking the necessary measures to address the illegal occupancy of maritime property; correcting the situation of and rehabilitating the Port of Beirut and repairing the damages in the vicinity of the facility to enable it to fully restore its role and contribute again to the growth of the Lebanese economy.

Gender asks

Reforms related to transportation should seek to:

- Promote safe and secure public means of transportation for women, including preventing and addressing sexual harassment.
- Promote women-led transportation initiatives, such as female drivers and transportation sector staff, complaint and reporting mechanisms, including preventing harassment and abuse.

An estimated

**57% OF WOMEN HAVE BEEN
SEXUALLY HARASSED IN
PUBLIC SPACES AT LEAST
ONCE IN LEBANON.**



Source: IMAGES MENA, 2017.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Modernizing tourism-related legislation; encouraging internal and external tourism; forming joint committees with the ministries to organize the tourism sector; reconstitute the National Tourism Promotion Council to reactivate investments, fund promotion campaigns and reach new emerging markets; equipping and developing the Office of Touristic Inquiries at the Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport in cooperation with the concerned administrations; reactivating the National Tourism Development Council.

Gender asks

Reforms related to tourism must:

- Ensure that incentives are put in place to support women's employment and female entrepreneurs in the culture and tourism sector.
- Include women in the committees to be formed with the ministries as well as in the National Tourism Promotion Council to organize the tourism sector.
- Address issues related sex tourism, and consequent exploitation of women.

There is limited data on gender and tourism in Lebanon but strong evidence of low engagement of women in the Middle East,

**WHERE WOMEN MAKE UP
LESS THAN 9% OF THE
TOURISM LABOUR FORCE.**



Source: UNWTO, 2020.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Filling vacancies through competency and integrity-based appointments, away from nepotism; working on enacting legislation on the assessment of the performance of public sector employees; completing the comprehensive mapping and classification of public sector employment.

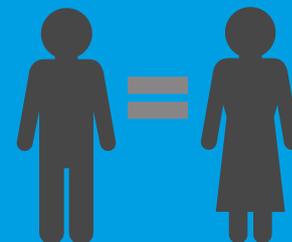
Gender asks

Reforms related to employment affairs should:

- Implement the 2020 law on sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Amend Article 24 of Law 46/12017 on flexible work to extend paid maternity leave to at least 14 weeks and introduce paid paternity leave (endorse the law proposed by NCLW); introduce a maternity insurance scheme funded through the National Social Security Fund, to decrease incentives for employers to prioritise the hiring of men.
- Amend the labour law to prohibit prospective employers to ask about family status.
- Repeal Article 26 of the Labour Law, which prohibits women from working in certain occupations considered arduous or hazardous.
- Support the development and implementation of family friendly, and work and life balance policies in place to help retain women in the work force.
- Increase the NSSF pay during maternity leave to full salary instead of 2/3. Amend of decree 46 in the NSSF on allowing the wife to benefit from educational and social services if the husband is out of a job.
- Include national and foreign domestic workers in the Labour Code, Article 7, in order to dismantle the Kafala system.

In 2000, Lebanon passed Labour Law 207, which stipulates under Article 26 that employers must

NOT DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN WITH REGARD TO KIND OF WORK, SALARY, OR WAGES, HIRING, PROMOTION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING, OR ATTIRE.



2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Seeking to pass the Administrative Decentralization bill in cooperation with Parliament, based on the report prepared by the concerned committee and which includes a draft of the bill it prepared.

Gender asks

- Any administrative reform and decentralization efforts should seek to promote equal employment opportunities throughout the civil service. This includes integrating initiative that seek to promote women in the more senior positions of the civil service, and ensuring that any reforms and cuts do not disproportionately affect women.

As of 2019, while

**43% OF OFFICIALS IN THE
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
ARE WOMEN,**

**ONLY 25% OF OFFICIALS
IN THE HIGHEST CATEGORY
ARE WOMEN.**

Source: ILO, 2019.

2021 Ministerial Statement Commitment

Seeking to secure an economic-social-health safety net to restore the purchasing power; activating the work of insurance and social institutions and expanding the coverage of services in all their forms; putting the prepaid cash assistance cards plan into effect in coordination with the Emergency Social Safety Net (EESN) Program targeting the neediest families; supporting all social assistance programs for the elderly, children, persons with disabilities and addicts; activating partnerships with social non-governmental organizations to enable families to face the lifting of subsidies on imported commodities; reactivating the loans offered by the National Housing Institute; seeking to enact a law on social security for the elderly in cooperation with Parliament.

Gender asks

Investment in the reform and financing of Lebanon's social protection systems should address gender discrimination that persists within all social protection instruments and laws, and:

- Amend discriminatory legislation (articles 14, 46 and 47) of the Social Security Law.
- Promote progressive taxation to expand Lebanon's tax base and expand social protection.
- Support a comprehensive pension scheme that combines a better contributory system with a non-contributory tax financed social pension component to provide robust social protection for elderly women and men.
- Support the work of the Social Development centers to better support women subject to domestic violence or any other gender-based violence and discriminations.
- Strengthen state-led cash and social assistance to safely reach the most vulnerable women and girls.

The social security law does not extend

EQUAL SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

TO THE SPOUSES OF MARRIED WOMEN WORKERS UNDER ARTICLE 46.

Source: UN Women and BRD - Forthcoming.