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## **‘FROM RESILIENCE TO DEVELOPMENT’: CALL FOR A REINVIGORATED INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO SUPPORT MASHREQ COUNTRIES HOSTING SYRIAN REFUGEES IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

Marseille, France, 7 September 2015 – 60 decision-making representatives from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Tunisia, Turkey and European countries affected by the refugee crisis, development and financing partners, practitioners and technical experts on fragility and conflict gathered in Marseille today to discuss the long term development implications of the refugee crisis in the Mashreq, where more than 4 million refugees are displaced. After acknowledging the complexity of the protracted crisis, participants confirmed that **the multidimensional nature of shocks —demographic, socio-economic, and political— defy conventional responses.** Participants confirmed that there cannot be any permanent solution to humanitarian and development challenges without ending the conflict in Syria.

In addition, many of the countries in the region—such as Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon—coping with large inflows of refugees are middle-income and do not have access to concessional financing. **There is thus a major financing gap, in which countries do not have access to the medium—and longer—term development assistance required to address the scope of the challenge.** Participants to the conference recognized the urgent need of increasing multi-year, predictable development resources, including the provision of concessional financing to strengthen the capacity of countries and communities hosting refugees to absorb the shocks on their economic and social fabric. This will be the subject of a discussion during the International Stakeholders’ Roundtable Meeting for the Middle East and North Africa Region, at the margin of the World Bank Group- International Monetary Fund Annual Meeting in Lima, Peru, on October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

Participants to the conference worked together to **identify viable solutions in terms of policy adjustment, development assistance and financing** in order to support the refugees and their hosting countries and communities, and discussed coordinated responses to this global displacement crisis.

In recent months, the humanitarian, social and economic impact of the Syrian conflict, entering its fifth year, reached unprecedented levels. While Syria is facing devastating human losses, human development reversals and physical infrastructure damages, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq have to cope with an unprecedented flow of refugees. In Lebanon, Syrian arrivals represent roughly 25% of the population; in Jordan, while some of the Syrians are living in camps, the majority—more than 80 percent—are staying in towns, cities and villages, where they share space, resources and services with their Jordanian hosts. To escape their precarious conditions a growing number of refugees have been seeking a risky passage beyond the region, many have died in the process.

In the Mashreq, the conflict in Syria and the resulting surge in populations places an extraordinary burden on host countries and communities and puts an additional strain on scarce resources for local communities: economic growth has faltered, unemployment is rising, infrastructure and natural resources are under immense pressures, municipal service delivery capacities, including education, health are overwhelmed and compromised. There is evidence that the Syria crisis has undermined precious and hard won development gains in the neighboring countries.



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As social tensions grow, governments are looking for new ways, with the help of the international community, to protect their countries' fragile internal stability and weather the adverse effect of this crisis on the broader region. Moreover, the political conflict in Syria and the resulting refugee crisis has significant spillover effects in the Mediterranean region and Europe. Recent events in Europe confirm that the welfare of refugees, internally displaced persons and host communities constitute a global public good.

Delegates acknowledge the importance of the Regional Resilience and Refugee Plan (3RP), a 5 country, 200 partnership platform. This unprecedented situation calls for a reinvigorated international response to support the hosting countries which so far have generously shouldered most of the burden of this crisis, offering the world a global public good for which they should be recognized and supported. This is now a defining moment for development partners in the European region and beyond to reflect in earnest about the dire consequences of insufficient action.

To this effect, the World Bank, the Center for Mediterranean Integration, the United Nations agencies (UNHCR, UNDP, and UN-ESCWA) as well as the French Development Agency (AFD) organized a high-level stakeholder conference entitled "From Resilience to Development". The conference sessions succeeded in:

- Acknowledging the need to end the conflict in Syria and protect the rights of refugees, including their right to voluntary return to their countries as the preferred durable solution.
- Raising awareness of the ongoing protection and humanitarian needs of the more than 4 million Syrian refugees in the region, who are becoming increasingly vulnerable.
- Reaffirming that the refugee crisis, because of its protracted nature and its impact on the hosting countries, has moved from a purely humanitarian challenge to a humanitarian and development one.
- Actively exploring innovative avenues of financial support including access of host countries to concessional funding as a way to mitigate the short, medium and long term adverse economic and social impact of the Syria crisis.
- Preparing for a common effort to support countries hosting refugees in their resilience and stabilization response plans, and looking forward to adapting said plans to the rapidly evolving situation and challenges on the ground.
- Sharing knowledge and good practices about innovative programs on the refugees and resilience issues in the region to inform development policies in the long term;
- Encouraging all partners to take an active role in the coming country consultations in preparation of the Resilience Development Forum, taking place on 09 November, in Amman, Jordan.

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