

# LEBANON'S OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF SYRIA

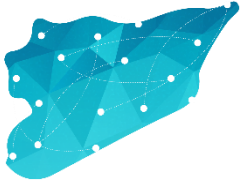
## Executive Summary

The destruction of historical Syrian cities has reached unprecedented levels as the Syrian Crisis goes into its sixth year and international actors enter the conflict. Against the backdrop of the special relationship between Lebanon and Syria and their close political, economic, and social ties, the forum discussed the impact of the Syrian Crisis on Lebanon in order to determine the latter's challenges, opportunities, and role in this context. The forum, moderated by H.E Nicolas Nahas, welcomed Eng. Neemat Frem as a keynote speaker and panelists: Dr. Nabil Sukar, Eng. Maroun Helou, Eng. Khaled Chehab, Dr. Khaled Abou Ismail, and Dr. Denise Sumpf (UN-ESCWA).

In his opening speech, Eng. Neemat Frem maintained that the key to stability and peace in the Middle East, and Syria in particular, is the creation of job opportunities, which could be achieved by focusing on the private sector. Using Lebanon as an example, Frem shared his view that the initiative spirit and positive vision of the private sector can help Syria rebuild itself, and that the Syrian government should aim at building partnerships with the sector. In addition, he called for a new reborn Syria focused on economic growth and built on three main pillars: freedom, equality through participation, and diversity. In this context, Frem finds the Lebanese model to be a distinctly valuable reference in terms of multi-cultural acceptance and growth.

Dr. Nabil Sukkar, Owner and Managing Director of the Syrian Consulting Bureau for Development and Investment, discussed the economic and social priorities, and the role of monetary and fiscal policies in rebuilding Syria. Dr. Sukkar emphasized that the priority must be given to the reconstruction of the great Syrian motorways from Aleppo to Damascus and other cities as well as the Syrian harbors of Latikia and Tartous. Eng. Maroun Helou on the other hand focused on the practical role of Lebanon for post-crisis Syria. Helou contended that Lebanon's geographic proximity to Syria, the neighboring countries' common cultures, origins, and language, and the unique talent of Lebanese engineers and architects place Lebanon in a distinctive position in the reconstruction of Syria. Helou announced that the Syndicate of Lebanese Contractors is well aware of its strategic position and, as such, is pursuing the enhancement of public works in North Lebanon, notably through the further development and upgrading of the Port of Tripoli. Helou affirmed the Association's dedication to negotiate with public authorities in order to render Lebanon an internationally attractive logistic hub. Eng. Khaled Chehad seconded Helou's vision and view announcing that the Lebanese Order of Engineers in Beirut is always ready to invest its knowledge and extensive experience in building Syria across different sectors: agriculture, construction, energy, water management, etc.

UN-ESCWA representatives, Dr. Khaled Abou Ismail and Dr. Denise Sumpf shared the findings of their latest studies and report, as well as the international community's perspective on the Syrian crisis. Dr. Khaled Abou Ismail reiterated the importance of a national change in Syria; a social contract and a new political shift are necessary. He further contended that the main solution to the refugee crisis is creating job opportunities for the refugee communities in neighboring and hosting countries; refugees should not be perceived as a burden but a potential for those countries to utilize and develop. Noting the close historical dependence between Lebanon and Syria, Sumpf examined the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon on the economic, social, and environmental levels. Sumpf shared the UN's vision of the challenges facing Lebanon and the potential solutions across all levels, while emphasizing the human and technical skills needed in the reconstruction of Syria.



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## CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Tuesday, 31 May 2016 / BIEL

- 18:00      **Opening Ceremony**  
Welcome Note: **Mr. Albert Aoun**, Chairman IFP Group
- Keynote Speech**  
**Eng. Neemat Frem** - CEO - INDEVCO Group
- 18:30      **Lebanon's Opportunities and Challenges in  
the Reconstruction of Syria Forum**  
**Panel Moderated by: H.E. Nicolas Nahas**
- Dr. Khaled Abou Ismail** - Chief of Economic Development and  
Poverty Section - UNESCWA
- Dr. Denise Sumpf** - First Economic Affairs Officer - UNESCWA
- Dr. Nabil Sukar** - Owner & Managing Director  
Syrian Consulting Bureau for Development & Investment
- Eng. Maroun Helou** - President - The Lebanese Contractors  
Association
- Eng. Khaled Chehab** - President - Lebanese Order of Engineers  
& Architects
- 20:00      **Q&A**