

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| A Word from the Ministry of Social Affairs | 12 |
| A Word from the United Nations Development Programme | 14 |
| A Word from the Central Administration for Statistics | 16 |
| Acknowledgements | 18 |
| Prologue: Methodology and objectives | 20 |
| 1. Survey objectives | 20 |
| 2. Questionnaires of the study | 21 |
| 3. Sampling plan | 21 |
| 4. Phases of work | 22 |
| 5. Rates of response and assessment of results | 22 |
| 6. Basic concepts | 23 |
| Chapter 1: Demographic characteristics of residents | 25 |
| 1. Number of residents and their geographic distribution | 26 |
| 2. Family structure and residential density within the dwelling | 28 |
| 3. Age pyramid and its characteristics | 32 |
| 4. Celibacy averages | 34 |
| 5. Population distribution according to place of registration and place of residence | 37 |
| Chapter 2: Educational status | 39 |
| 1. School enrollment | 40 |
| 2. School enrollment and age-grade delay at the elementary level | 41 |
| 3. School enrollment and age-grade delay at the intermediate level | 42 |
| 4. School enrollment and age-grade delay at the secondary level | 43 |
| 5. Educational attainment of Lebanese residents | 44 |
| 6. Distribution of students according to type of educational institution | 47 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Chapter 3: Labor force and economic activity rates (Employment and unemployment) | 51 |
| 1. Labor force and economic activity rates | 52 |
| a. Economic activity rate according to age and sex | 52 |
| b. Economic activity rates by Governorate | 54 |
| 2. Characteristics of actual labor force (or working individuals) aged 15 years and above | 55 |
| a. Distribution of actual labor force by age and sex | 55 |
| b. Distribution of actual labor force by educational attainment | 55 |
| c. Distribution of actual labor force by Governorates and sex | 56 |
| d. Distribution of actual labor force by profession status | 56 |
| e. Distribution of actual labor force by employment categories | 57 |
| f. Distribution of actual labor force by the economic sector of the employing institution | 58 |
| g. Distribution of actual labor force by health insurance type | 58 |
| h. Distribution of actual labor force by work duration and usual number of working hours | 59 |
| 3. Unemployment and unemployment rates | 60 |
| 4. Characteristics of the unemployed aged 15 and above | 61 |
| a. Distribution of the unemployed by sex and marital status | 61 |
| b. Distribution of the unemployed by educational attainment | 61 |
| c. Distribution of the unemployed by governorates | 62 |
| d. Distribution of the unemployed by means for job seeking and according to time spent in job seeking | 62 |
| | |
| Chapter 4: Health insurance and chronic diseases | 65 |
| 1. Benefiting from any type of health insurance | 66 |
| a. The services covered by the various health insurances | 67 |
| b. Percentages of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance | 67 |
| c. Characteristics of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance | 70 |
| 2. Suffering from chronic diseases and disability | 72 |
| a. Suffering from chronic diseases | 72 |
| b. Disability and the characteristics of the disabled | 72 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Chapter 5: Cultural and leisure activities | 75 |
| 1. Cultural and leisure activities practiced by individuals aged 5 years and above | 76 |
| a. Weekly reading newspapers and magazines | 77 |
| b. Using the internet weekly outside the work domain | 78 |
| c. Practicing weekly social or student activities | 79 |
| d. Monthly visits to relatives and friends | 79 |
| e. Going out monthly to restaurants and cafes | 80 |
| f. Engaging in educational and artistic activities once a year | 81 |
| 2. Travel with at least one night spent abroad during the past 12 months | 82 |
| a. Distribution of individuals who have traveled once or more, spending at least one night abroad, during the past 12 months by age and sex | 82 |
| b. Distribution of residents who have traveled once or more, spending at least one night abroad, during the past 12 months by educational attainment | 83 |
| c. Distribution of residents who have traveled once or more, spending at least one night abroad, during the past 12 months by governorate | 83 |
| d. Distribution of residents who have traveled once or more, spending at least one night abroad, during the past 12 months by current professional status (relationship with labor force) | 83 |
| e. Distribution of trips of residents by cause of travel | 84 |
| f. Distribution of trips of residents by means of transportation | 84 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Chapter 6: Main characteristics of residences | 87 |
| 1. Characteristics of primary residences | 88 |
| a. Distribution of primary residences by Governorates | 88 |
| b. Distribution of primary residences by type of residence | 88 |
| c. Distribution of primary residences by age of residence | 89 |
| d. Distribution of primary residences according to area, number of rooms and the main floor material | 89 |
| e. Distribution of primary residences by ownership and type of ownership | 89 |
| 2. Services available at primary residences | 90 |
| a. Sources of water and sanitation means in primary residences | 90 |
| b. Sources of energy for lighting and cooking in primary residences | 90 |
| c. Heating systems in primary residences | 91 |
| d. Ways and frequencies of dumping waste in primary residences | 91 |
| 3. Primary residence surroundings and external disturbances | 92 |
| a. Primary residence surroundings | 92 |
| b. Distribution of primary residences by availability of some services in the vicinity | 92 |
| 4. Home appliances within the primary residence and transportation means | 92 |
| a. Existence of home appliances within the primary residences | 92 |
| b. Distribution of households by ownership of transportation means | 93 |
| 5. Secondary residences | 93 |

List of Contents for tables and diagrams in Chapters

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Chapter 1: Demographic characteristics of residents | 25 |
| 1-1 Distribution of households and individuals, average household size and average population density by Governorate | 27 |
| 1-2 Percentage distribution of individuals residing in Lebanon in 1970, 1997 and 2004 by Governorate | 27 |
| 1-3 Distribution of household residents (by governorates) based on their relationship with head of household, per 1000 household heads | 28 |
| 1-4 Percentage distribution of households according to their number of residents | 29 |
| 1-5 Distribution of single-person households according to age group and sex | 29 |
| 1-6 Distribution of two-person households according to marital status and sex | 29 |
| 1-7 Percentage distribution of households by governorate according to the average number of individuals per room, per dwelling | 30 |
| 1-8 Percentage distribution of households by governorates according to the individual's allocated share of dwelling space | 31 |
| 1-9 Percentage distribution of population according to age, sex , male to female ratio and age groups | 32 |
| 1-10 Age dependency rates by governorates | 34 |
| 1-11 Average male celibacy for 2004 by governorates, and for 1970, 1997 and 2004 for all of Lebanon | 35 |
| 1-12 Average female celibacy for 2004 by governorates, and for 1970, 1997 and 2004 for all of Lebanon | 36 |
| 1-13 Percentage distribution of Lebanese citizens according to place of registration and place of residence | 37 |
| Chapter 2: Educational status | 39 |
| 2-1 Rates of school enrollment by age | 40 |
| 2-2 Rates of school enrollment by governorate and age | 41 |
| 2-3 Rates of school enrollment and age-grade delay at the elementary level by sex | 42 |
| 2-4 Rates of school enrollment and age-grade delay at the intermediate level by sex | 43 |
| 2-5 Rates of school enrollment and age-grade delay at the secondary level by sex | 44 |
| 2-6 Percentage distribution of Lebanese residents (aged 4 years and above by age and educational level | 45 |
| 2-7 Percentage of illiteracy for ages 10 years and above by age and sex | 46 |
| 2-8 Distribution of residents (aged 4 years and above) by place of residency and educational attainment | 47 |
| 2-9 Distribution of students by level of education and type of educational institution | 48 |
| 2-10 Distribution of students according to governorates and type of educational institution | 48 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Chapter 3: Labor force and economic activity rates (Employment and unemployment) | 51 |
| 3-1 Economic activity rates according to age and sex | 53 |
| 3-2 Economic activity rates by governorates | 54 |
| 3-3 Distribution of actual labor force by age and sex | 55 |
| 3-4 Distribution of actual labor force by educational attainment and sex | 56 |
| 3-5 Distribution of actual labor force by sex and governorates | 56 |
| 3-6 Distribution of actual labor force per governorates by sex | 56 |
| 3-7 Distribution of actual labor force by profession status | 57 |
| 3-8 Distribution of actual labor force by employment category | 58 |
| 3-9 Distribution of actual labor force by insurance coverage and type | 59 |
| 3-10 Unemployment rate by age and sex | 60 |
| 3-11 Unemployment rate by educational attainment for age group 15 and above | 60 |
| 3-12 Unemployment rate for age group 15 and above by governorate and sex | 61 |
| 3-13 Distribution of the unemployed by age and sex | 61 |
| 3-14 Distribution of the unemployed by educational attainment and sex | 62 |
| 3-15 Distribution of the unemployed by governorate | 62 |
| Chapter 4: Health insurance and chronic diseases | 65 |
| 4-1 Distribution of residents according to benefiting from at least one type of health insurance | 67 |
| 4-2 Percentage of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance, per governorate | 68 |
| 4-3 Percentage of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by marital status | 69 |
| 4-4 Percentage of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by educational attainment | 70 |
| 4-5 Percentage of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by current profession (relationship with labor force) | 70 |
| 4-6 Distribution of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by educational attainment | 71 |
| 4-7 Distribution of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by current profession (relationship with labor force) | 71 |
| 4-8 Distribution of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by governorate | 71 |
| 4-9 Percentage of suffering from chronic diseases, and percentage benefiting from specialized follow-up programs | 72 |
| 4-10 Distribution of the disabled by causes of disability | 72 |
| 4-11 Distribution of the disabled by educational attainment | 72 |
| Chapter 5: Cultural and leisure activities | 75 |
| 5-1 Distribution of residents by leisure activities | 77 |
| 5-2 Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who read newspapers and magazines weekly, by governorate | 78 |
| 5-3 Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who read newspapers and magazines weekly, by sex per age group | 78 |
| 5-4 Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who read newspapers and magazines weekly per age group by sex | 78 |
| 5-5 Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who use the Internet weekly, per governorate | 78 |
| 5-6 Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who use the Internet weekly, by sex for each age group | 79 |
| 5-7 Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who use the Internet weekly, per age group by sex | 79 |
| 5-8 Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who engage in weekly social and student activities, by sex per each age group | 79 |
| 5-9 Distribution of total individuals aged five years and above who engage in weekly social and student activities, per age group by sex | 79 |

List of Contents for tables in Chapters

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 5-10 | Distribution of total individuals aged five years and above who visit relatives and friends monthly, per governorate | 80 |
| 5-11 | Distribution of total individuals aged five years and above who visit relatives and friends monthly, by sex per each age group | 80 |
| 5-12 | Distribution of total individuals aged five years and above who visit relatives and friends monthly, per age group by sex | 80 |
| 5-13 | Percentage of individuals aged five years and above who go out monthly to restaurants and cafés per governorate | 80 |
| 5-14 | Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who go out monthly to restaurants and cafés, by sex per each age group | 81 |
| 5-15 | Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who go out monthly to restaurants and cafés, per age group by sex | 81 |
| 5-16 | Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who engage in artistic and cultural activities at least once a year, by governorate | 81 |
| 5-17 | Distribution of individuals aged five years and above who engage in artistic and cultural activities at least once per year, by sex per each age group | 81 |
| 5-18 | Distribution of total individuals aged five years and above who engage in artistic and cultural activities at least once per year, per age group by sex | 82 |
| 5-19 | Distribution of individuals who have traveled once or more, spending at least one night abroad, during the past 12 months by number of trips | 82 |
| 5-20 | Distribution of individuals who have traveled once or more, spending at least one night abroad, during the past 12 months, by age and sex | 82 |
| 5-21 | Distribution of residents who traveled once or more, spending at least one night abroad, during the past 12 months, by educational attainment | 83 |
| 5-22 | Distribution of residents who traveled once or more, spending at least one night abroad, during the past 12 months by governorate | 83 |
| 5-23 | Distribution of resident who traveled once or more spending at least one night abroad during the past 12 months, by current profession status (relationship with labor force) | 83 |
| 5-24 | Distribution of trips of residents by means of transportation | 84 |

Chapter 6: Main characteristics of residences

87

| | | |
|------|---|----|
| 6-1 | Distribution of primary residences by governorate | 88 |
| 6-2 | Distribution of primary residences by age of residence | 89 |
| 6-3 | Distribution of primary residences by area of residence | 89 |
| 6-4 | Sources of potable water | 90 |
| 6-5 | Sources of service water | 90 |
| 6-6 | Distribution of primary residences by availability of service water from the public networks | 90 |
| 6-7 | Sources of energy for lighting in primary residences | 91 |
| 6-8 | Heating systems in primary residences | 91 |
| 6-9 | Ways of dumping waste in primary residences | 91 |
| 6-10 | Distribution of primary residences by availability of some services within a 10 minute walk from the dwelling | 92 |

List of Diagrams

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 1-1 | The age pyramid | 33 |
| 3-1 | Economic activity rates by age and sex | 53 |
| 3-2 | Distribution of actual labor force by economic sector | 58 |
| 3-3 | Distribution of workers benefiting from at least one type of health insurance by type of this of insurance | 59 |
| 4-1 | Percentage of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by sex | 68 |
| 4-2 | Percentage of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by age | 69 |
| 4-3 | Distribution of beneficiaries from at least one type of health insurance by age | 71 |
| 5-1 | Distribution of residents by cause of travel | 84 |
| 6-1 | Distribution of primary residences by type of residence | 88 |
| 6-2 | Distribution of primary residences by number of rooms | 89 |
| 6-3 | Availability of home appliances in primary residences | 93 |

List of statistical tables**95**

A Word from the Ministry of Social Affairs

The current government has resolutely determined, in its ministerial statement, to award social affairs the attention it deserves. This commitment includes the achievement of several objectives, the foremost being to minimize the gap between regions in order to reach a balanced level of development. Such a goal is also a constitutional attribute as, according to the Taef Agreement, it is one of the main traits of the establishment of a just state. The pledge also encompasses the improvement of living standards of the people, mainly through fighting all aspects of poverty and deprivation, and eradicating extreme poverty as specified in the Millennium Development Goals that Lebanon is committed to. Finally, we aim to accomplish a number of social targets that include strengthening social safety nets for the most needy, empowering women and youth, and enhancing civil society capacities, as well as every step that falls under the category of social development.

Within this general commitment, there are several tasks and roles that the Ministry of Social Affairs takes upon itself. According to the ministry's understanding of contemporary development, those roles and tasks are allocated in the following four integrated levels: first, social development; second, social security for the marginalized classes; third, contributing to local development; and fourth, contributing in providing aid and assistance in emergency cases. The ministry sets its plans and programs according to this understanding, and improves the needed mechanisms and tools.

In this regard, carrying out studies and research, in addition to providing a comprehensive and updated social database, is considered a top priority for the ministry, in order to build its plans upon scientific foundations. Following the years of its establishment, the ministry has offered various valuable and scientifically helpful

contributions such as studies, reports and field surveys, exceeding its scope to include other ministries and many other international and local bodies involved in development.

Thus, the National Survey of Household Living Conditions (The multipurpose Survey, 2004) is a continuation of this role that was jointly initiated by the ministry and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), through a population and housing survey performed between 1994 and 1996. The results of this first survey set the basis to identify the demographic and social conditions in the mid-1990s. Furthermore, this survey helped form the foundations of the study of poverty and deprivation, as well as that of regional gaps, through the "Mapping of living conditions" implemented by the ministry in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme. Its results were widely requested, as it was the first national study focused on poverty which also adopted an innovative approach, one that is closer to the current understanding of human poverty, and as such acquired even greater significance among development communities.

Today, ten years after The Population and Housing Survey, and eight years after the publication of the 'Mapping of Living Conditions', the Ministry of Social Affairs joined efforts again with United Nations Development Programme, as well as the Central Administration for Statistics, with the support of other partners. In order to improve and update our understanding of current living conditions, it was decided to implement the second National Survey of Household Living Conditions – 2004. The survey was unanimously determined to be a multi-purpose survey, given the multiple objectives it serves. Dominant among those objectives was building

a profound national study about poverty and deprivation based on two understandings: first, a definition of human poverty which accepts the Unsatisfied Basic Needs (UBN) approach, similar to the one adopted in 1998; and second, a grounding in the poverty line approach, which is calculated according to income and expenditure data with respect to international standards. This study will allow an assessment of the trends of living conditions and levels of deprivation during the past decade. As it is also a national study, it will also allow the computation of a national poverty line which can be used by macroeconomic policies and for international comparisons.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the Ministry of Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Central Administration for Statistics and the Arab Household Health Project, as well as other international organizations, has implemented a Lebanese survey for household health. This study included field research focusing on the youth and touching upon aspects of labor, household life, health conditions, preparedness for giving birth and attitudes towards those matters, in addition to women and children's health. All of these are considered by the Ministry of Social Affairs as basic features in planning national policies, as stated by the Millennium Development Goals.

The Ministry of Social Affairs wishes to express its gratitude to all those who endeavored and persevered to achieve this survey and publish this report. Great appreciation is certainly extended to the United Nations Development Programme for its continuous technical and financial support to the ministry's efforts to enhance development and implement social programs. We are also grateful for the effort exerted by the Central Administration for Statistics team in realizing the survey and providing material support for that purpose.

Work is not yet over. A number of other publications will follow pertaining to poverty measurement based on the UBN approach, in addition to the internationally adopted poverty line approach. We are certain that the successively produced information and studies will shape the foundations of additional – and more efficient – social policies, chief among them a national strategy for poverty reduction, social safety nets enhancement and achieving a balanced level of development. We are determined to realize the requirements of this strategy to protect the marginalized classes, to improve the living conditions of the poor and to develop Lebanon's underprivileged regions. This study will also contribute to the effective integration of social issues into the government's perception and in the devising of economic policies that are more adequate for the poor and those with limited income. The current National Survey of Household Living Conditions will also foment more success in attaining an optimal decentralization of economic activities for all sectors and regions, whereby a broader social base,

gaining from economic growth, is achieved.

Finally, I am positive that this study will help improve the effectiveness of the reconstruction plans following the recent Israeli war on Lebanon in July 2006, in a manner that will ensure harmony between both the immediate handling of the direct impact of human and material losses, and the medium- and long-range objectives of creating the prerequisites of a stable and sustainable socio-economic recovery.

Long live Lebanon

Nayla René Mouawad
Minister of Social Affairs

A Word from the United Nations Development Programme

The magnitude social development is acquiring has been evident, and it has become one of the basic issues within the national reconciliation document and part and parcel of the national terminology aimed at reducing poverty and balancing development among various regions and social classes. Thus, any initiative at this level can be considered a strategic choice as it will inevitably affect the dynamics of social mobility and Lebanese public life. This is an intricate task, especially within the complicated political state of affairs witnessed by the region in general, and more specifically the thorny economic circumstances that Lebanon is passing through today. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme are still committed to reach a sustainable and balanced social development, particularly through the development of the necessary tools, methods and resources to set up constructive social policies and interventions to reduce poverty and to improve the living conditions of the poor.

This task forms a basic component of a joint development project between UNDP and the Ministry of Social Affairs, which aspires to build capacities with the purpose of reducing poverty through various interventions. Some of those interventions are targeted at presenting information and studies to reach a profound understanding of economic and social conditions in the country, so as to be able to formulate national strategies for social development and poverty reduction. This report follows the publication of "Social and Economic Conditions in Lebanon: Facts and Horizons," which deals – through presentation and analysis – with the status of the main social sectors in Lebanon, resulting from the compilation and documentation of all available data between 1996 and 2002.

The report in hand today is the initial product of the National Survey of Household Living Conditions "The Multipurpose Survey" that was implemented jointly with the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Central Administration for Statistics. It provides an updated rich economic and social database and indicators in Lebanon, distributed according to various regions, depending on the basic questionnaire results used in the multi-purpose survey in 2004. This report will soon be followed by many publications to be issued consecutively, making use of the additional data of the survey, especially those pertaining to income and expenditure. These will include a comparative study of social conditions between 1995 and 2004, in addition to a more comprehensive and elaborate updated Mapping of living conditions, providing basic information pertaining to differences among regions for a number of economic and social indicators. In addition to all of that, work is being carried out to compute, scientifically and objectively, a certain number of indicators pertaining to income poverty, for the first time ever in this country.

In this regard, the great effort invested to accomplish the National Survey of Household Living Conditions "The Multipurpose survey", in compiling and publishing the relevant data in this report, should be highly acknowledged. Gratitude is extended first to the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Central Administration for Statistics, our main partners in achieving the survey and producing the data, and in providing technical and financial support. We would also wish to thank the working team and the independent experts who were available through all the stages of implementation, providing valuable and essential remarks and suggestions.

The Lebanese social situation has changed due to the

recent attack on Lebanon and its negative impact on structures, buildings, infrastructure, economic activity and social conditions of the population. Yet, this only adds a further impetus to the report, in offering fundamental and reliable material to become better acquainted with the social and economic indicators prior to the war, and in researching, evaluating and assessing the effect of the war on the populace.

We hope that this task provides a useful and valuable tool to all those who work in – or are concerned with – the domain of social affairs, in setting up and developing plans, policies, interventions and work schedules in order to revive, rebuild and enhance development in this country. We are working to take effective steps, following this report, to set up rules and regulations to periodically update economic and social data in Lebanon.

Dr. Mona Hammam
Resident Representative - UNDP

A Word from the Central Administration for Statistics

The Central Administration for Statistics wishes to thank Prime Minister Fouad Siniora for backing and sponsoring all of its work, especially this statistical endeavor. The Administration is pleased to provide decision-makers, researchers and citizens with the results of the National Survey of Household Living Conditions “The Multipurpose survey”, a cooperative effort by the Ministry of Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Program’s project “Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction.”

This survey is of great national importance as it was the last broad survey to assess the economic and social conditions of the households in Lebanon prior to the recent Israeli attacks. It provides varied data and social indicators on Lebanese households’: demographic status, educational conditions, employment and unemployment, health insurance, chronic diseases, disability, and leisure activities. The survey also provides data concerning the characteristics of residences and their available appliances. The data are available at both the national and local levels and thus enables comparisons with other surveys’ results – in particular those which are currently being conducted to assess the damage to economic and social conditions following the attacks on Lebanon.

This survey breaks new ground through the firm cooperation displayed by the Central Administration for Statistics, the Ministry of Social Affairs and United Nations Development Programme.

It is worth noting that the success of any field or statistical undertaking depends – on one hand – on the work of the Central Administration for Statistics, as it is the body responsible for setting forth the methodology of the survey and the implementation of the fieldwork – from the preparation of the necessary questionnaires and the various mechanisms to organize the fieldwork, up until

the announcement of the results. On the other hand, this success also depends on the citizens – for their joining of forces with the Administration to fill-out the questionnaires, and for their objectiveness and reliability in answering the questions. Thus, we would especially like to express gratitude to all the households covered by the survey for their cooperation and positive reaction to the Central Administration for Statistics.

We are grateful, as well, for the assistance of the World Bank in this survey, in addition to the backing and support of the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies in France (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques - INSEE).

Finally, we must recognize the excellence of the performance by the Central Administration for Statistics team; both for their high proficiency and accuracy in preparing, designing and organizing the work, and for their appropriate use of resources despite the intricate circumstances under which they had to work; and we would like especially to acknowledge the efforts of the statistician in charge of this survey, Najwa Yaacoub, Deputy Head of the Division of National Coordination and Accounting.

Dr. Maral Tutelian Gidanian
Director General – Central Administration for Statistics

Acknowledgments

The National Survey of Household Living Conditions - 2004 report would not have been possible without the joint effort and cooperation of a large number of people working for, or on contract with, the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Central Administration for Statistics, the United Nations Development Programme, and the Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction Project. All of the above contributed to the achievement of this task, each according to his/her expertise and capacities.

Field survey – Central Administration for Statistics

The survey was realized under the direction of the Central Administration for Statistics Director-General, Maral Tutelian. Najwa Yaacoub, the statistician in charge of the study and Deputy Head of the Division of Coordination and Accounting, provided meticulous daily follow-up and implementation to identify the necessary methods and designs for the statistical work, monitor and supervise its implementation, and analyze the results and determine its conclusions. The contributions of the following team are gratefully noted:

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| Preparing the questionnaires and setting up their guidelines | Ibtissam Jouni social scientist |
| | Lara Badr social scientist |
| | Lilianne Nasr assistant statistician |

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| | Najwa Yaacoub – statistician, Deputy Head of the Division of National Coordination and Accounting |
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| Training of field investigators and supervisors | Najwa Yaacoub |
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| Chapters III, V & VI (Employment and unemployment; Cultural and leisure activities; Main characteristics of residences) | Najwa Yaacoub and Lara Badr |
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Ministry of Social Affairs United Nations Development Programme

Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction

Implemented under the auspices and supervision of the director-general of the Ministry of Social Affairs, and directed by National Coordinator Nimat Kanaan (until July 2005), this project was jointly supported by MoSA and the United Nations Development Programme. Through the following statistical, poverty measurement and social development experts, follow-up, supervision and technical support was provided to the National Survey of Household Living Conditions: Adib Nehmeh, project head (up until October 2005); Dr. Marwan Houri, the survey's technical consultant; Dr. Mohammad Hussein Baker, international expert in poverty measurements; Dr. Hashem el Hussein, social affairs expert.

The project team in charge of coordinating and providing follow-up on the survey with the Central Administration for Statistics includes: Mayssa Nehlawi, Mazhar Harakeh (until December 2005), Sawsan Masri, Edmond Harfoush, information technology expert and Elianne Mouawad, research assistant.

The Ministry of Social Affairs also contributed through Dr. Mariana Khayat Sabbouri, in follow-up and coordination with The Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM), and through Fadi Yarak, in providing administrative support. Furthermore, a large number of surveying field investigators played an important role in this study, as well as other individuals responsible for editing and entering the data.

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Mayssa Nehlawi, Najwa Yaacoub, Lara Badr, Sawsan Masri, Adib Nehmeh, Amal Karaki and Marwan Houri all reviewed and examined the report. Fares Abi Saab was in charge of inspecting the Arabic text, and Imad Malouf provided the English translation.

Prologue:

Methodology and Objectives

The National Survey of Household Living Conditions (The Multipurpose survey) lies within the framework of assignments entrusted by law to the Central Administration for Statistics regarding the provision of statistical data and facts on all aspects of economic and social life in Lebanon. The action plan, provided and implemented by the Administration, includes a multi-purpose social study focusing on two central issues: first, an examination of the living conditions of households and, second, a study of household expenditures.

This multi-purpose study was prepared concurrently with the Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction Project, which is a joint venture between the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to implement a social survey with very similar objectives to those of the Administration's survey. Recognizing the need to cooperate and join efforts between the public administrations, the Central Administration for Statistics and the project signed a cooperation agreement for this national study on January 23, 2003. The Central Administration for Statistics implemented and technically supervised the study, with support from the Capacity Building for Poverty Reduction Project.

1. Survey objectives

The National Survey of Household Living Conditions (The Multipurpose survey) provides a statistical database vital for the setting forth of national policies in various sectors. This database forms a basis for the studying and identification of:

- The demographic and social characteristics of households and their individuals.
- The characteristics of the individuals' economic activity.
- The characteristics of the household and the conditions of dwellings.
- Poverty lines and the characteristics of the poor.
- The household's budget, income and expenditure details.
- The consumption quantities of food and non-food items by households, and an updating of the weights used to produce the Consumer Price Index.
- The national accounts of final household consumption.

2. Questionnaires of the study

The study consists of four questionnaires: one on living conditions, and the other three pertaining to household expenditure.

a. Living conditions questionnaire:

This questionnaire investigates the characteristics of individuals at the demographic, educational, economic, health and other levels. It also includes data pertaining to the household, such as the household's financial condition and its sources of income, the characteristics of the primary and secondary residences, expenditures associated with the residence, its surroundings and external disturbances, domestic services provided by others and transportation means.

b. Household expenditure questionnaires

(1) Purchases questionnaire for previous periods: Includes data pertaining to the cost of services and purchases of specific goods for the household during the past 12 months prior to completing the questionnaire.

(2) Expenditure diary 1: The household head, or any member of the household in charge of household purchases, recorded what was bought (both goods and services), what the household received for free, and what it had presented as gifts, (or what it received from its own production or work), for a period of 14 days, in addition to information regarding meals and their locations. This individual provides data on his/herself, and all household members aged below 15 years.

(3) Individual questionnaire and expenditure diary 2: This series of questions was provided to all household members aged 15 years and above. Each individual was requested to write down everything purchased, received or presented as a gift (or what the individual had received from his/her own production or work) for a period of 14 days, in addition to information regarding meals and their locations. Moreover, this booklet included data on the financial status and income of the relevant individual.

This report presents the official results of household living conditions. The results related to household expenditures will be published later, in a separate report.

3. Sampling plan

The sampling plan was dual-phased; the sample of geographic islands was selected during phase I, and the primary residences sample from each primary sampling unit (PSU) was selected during phase II.

The sampling base for phase I was the PSU prepared by the Central Administration for Statistics in 2004 to conduct a comprehensive survey of the buildings and institutions. The sample's units were selected via a Systematic Random Sampling, after the PSUs were organized to ensure the best possible geographic distribution, following specific sampling designs. A survey was then made of the buildings and units within the PSUs for selection of the primary residences. A drawing step equivalent to 7.5 was adopted in the densely populated areas and 5 in the less populated areas, determining the surveyed residences in each of the PSUs.

The sample covered primary residences distributed across Lebanese territory, with the exception of the Palestinian camps, regardless of the nationality of the residence's occupants. The actual sample size was 14,948 households designated to fill out the Household Living Conditions questionnaire. Out of this sample, a smaller sample was selected to fill out the other questionnaires pertaining to household expenditures.

The studies on household expenditures required year-long field work, to include coverage of the households' varied seasonal expenditures. As such, this sample was divided into 27 intervals, each covering two weeks. A balanced distribution was maintained through:

- Providing coverage of all Lebanese territory at any of the survey stages; and
- Designing the length of the survey period to allow the emergence of seasonal changes in expenditures.

4. Phases of work

a. Preparatory work

The preparatory phase of the survey included basic functions such as: preparing the questionnaires and testing them; formulating office and field work guidelines; determining the sampling plan, selecting the sample and preparing maps for fieldwork; forming working groups, preparing training material for the surveyors and training them; customizing a computer program to administer the status of the questionnaires in each sample unit by tracking each questionnaire from its initial data entry in the field, until its completion and archiving; and finally performing the pilot test before initiating the field work.

b. Field work

In January 2004, 110 people attended a training workshop, which concluded with a field and office test. Individuals who passed the exams were selected to join the fieldwork teams, consisting of two field supervisors and two field researchers, to hold the interviews and fill out the questionnaires. The fieldwork started in February 2004, and lasted for a period of 54 weeks. The teams encountered numerous difficulties, including convincing the households to respond to the surveys, and trying to maintain the continuity of fieldwork throughout the survey's period.

c. Verification and coding

The objective of verification and coding is to ensure that the field researcher has filled out the questionnaires according to instructions, to avoid errors. Each questionnaire was initially reviewed by the field supervisor, and was then checked and coded by the Central Administration for Statistics office teams in distinct phases: the initial checking and coding, coding of professions and economic activities according to international classifications, and checking and final review before entering the questionnaires into the computer.

d. Entering data into computers, cleaning the data and generating the statistical tables

An ORACLE computer program was set up to enter data, along with various specialized programs to check the data entered for errors, including data entry inaccuracies. Then the files were transferred to the SPSS (Statistical packages for Social Sciences) program to generate statistical tables – some of which appeared in this report.

5. Rates of responses and assessment of results

Out of the sample, 13,003 households – consisting of 56,513 individuals – completed the data in the questionnaire. The response rate reached 87% of the households sampled. The questionnaires of the remaining 1,945 households were not filled out due to the households' refusal to respond, or their absence from the residences.

All figures provided by this study are estimates, based on the selected sample. A "sampling error" should be taken into consideration, thus a 95% confidence interval was computed.

| Number of residents | Estimate | Margin | Percentage |
|---------------------|----------|---------|------------|
| Lebanon | 3755034 | ±124482 | 3.3% |