

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has published the *Human Development Report* on yearly basis since 1990. These *global* reports have advocated a new approach to development and have monitored progress made at the world level according to this new approach. Soon after the publication of the first Report it became clear that *national* reports on human development were also necessary. National reports afford a more detailed look at the national human development situation and adapt the application of the concept to the particular situation and needs of the country. They enable the Government in cooperation with civil society to develop national policies that are in tune with a human development approach to development. And they help create awareness among policy makers and the general public of the need for a sustainable development process. The first national Human Development Reports were published in 1992 by the governments of Bangladesh and the Cameroon. By the end of 1997 some 100 countries had issued national Human Development Reports, among them were three Arab countries: Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon.

The rapidly growing number of *Human Development Reports* at the national level is a clear indication of the importance and wide acceptance of the concept of human development as a guiding concept for the formulation of development policies and projects. The impact of these reports on decision-making has been significant in many instances. For example, in the Philippines, the president directed all local government units to devote at least twenty per cent of their internal revenue allotment to human development priorities and instructed concerned authorities to include the Human Development Index in their regularly published statistics and to insure the proper financing for the establishment of a human development database. He also instituted a monitoring system for local human development indices and a reward for good performance at the local level. Closer to home, the *Human Development Reports* of Egypt resulted in the institution of meetings of governors to review regional disparities and devise strategies for reducing them. The governors established a platform for action and monitoring aimed at assessing progress in reducing disparities using the findings of the reports as basis for information in this regard. The Reports are also explicitly used as basis for policy at the national legislative and executive branches.

The first Lebanese human development report, entitled *A Profile of Sustainable Human Development in Lebanon*, was published in January 1997. Work on it was done during late 1995 and most of 1996. It was the result of a joint effort by a team of national researchers, assisted by a group of volunteers who worked on information gathering and translation, and staff from the office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Beirut. It involved extensive consultations with government departments, civil society organizations, media representatives and representatives of international organizations. The preparation of the report also involved a process of supporting and complementary information and advocacy activities. These activities included three workshops dealing with human development in the Lebanese context, with poverty and poverty alleviation, and with social capital formation were also organized during this period.

One of the main problems that faced this exercise was the paucity and unreliability of data. A number of statistical activities were being undertaken by the government at the time, but only few results were available. Researchers had to use a limited set of international data

on Lebanon that were, in part, educated guesses, in addition to statistics that were obtained from small sample surveys undertaken by private researchers and research institutions. As a result, there were some inconsistencies in the statistics used that could hardly have been avoided.

The first report was very well received. In all, more than 2,500 copies were distributed in both Arabic and English, of which more than half commercially. Most government departments and all components of civil society and scores of individual organizations welcomed its publication and many used it in their studies and training activities. The report triggered dozens of requests for resource inputs in conferences, seminars and other meetings organized at different levels. Some researchers praised the report as a potential breakthrough in development thinking in the country, while others criticized it as too compromising in its criticisms. A number of schools and universities now use it as part of their teaching material. The report proved to be an excellent tool for awareness raising and spreading knowledge about the concept and approach of sustainable human development; it has been invaluable in promoting the broad social change presently at work in the country. Regionally, the reception was most positive as indicated by the requests for information and advice in support of the own national efforts of other countries to produce a similar report, as well as by the deliberations at different UNESCWA meetings on the subject. The report also was used as a resource input in different meetings and several requests for technical assistance were made by other Arab countries.

It is to be noted that the main finding and conclusion of the first report remains very much valid today. The report strongly urged national dialogue to achieve a social contract for sustainable human development. The purpose of a social contract for development is to reach agreement at the national level on the resources available and the opportunities for progress and development centered on people, and on the main obstacles related to it; and, in the light of this to agree on priorities, areas and modalities of intervention, and policies to ensure a fair sharing of the burdens and returns of development by the different groups of society.

The present Report, prepared in major part during the first half of 1998, is the second one for Lebanon. Fortunately, the results of the most important national surveys that were being undertaken at the time of writing of the first Report came out in time for use in this Report. Most important of these for the present Report were: the Population and Housing Survey undertaken by the Ministry of Social Affairs with assistance from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the Survey on Maternal and Child Health (Lebanon: PAPCHILD) undertaken by the Ministry of Public Health in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs and with support from the Arab Gulf Fund for the United Nations (AGFUND), UNFPA, the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO); the Survey on Household Living Conditions undertaken by the Central Administration of Statistics with assistance from UNDP; and, the Labour Force and Employment Survey undertaken by the National Employment Agency with assistance from UNDP and the International Labour Organization (ILO). This wealth of data has permitted the utilization of up-to-date statistical information in the present Report. It should be noted, however, that analysis of the data of the Population and Housing Survey was underway at the time of writing and population data adjusted for under-enumeration was produced towards the end of the period of writing. Since these adjustments affected in particular the data presented in the chapters on The Demography of Youth and on Youth and Family Formation, these two chapters were revised in order to utilize the adjusted data.

This Report differs from the first report also in its content. The first report dealt exclusively with the overall aspects of human development in Lebanon. This Report consists of two distinct parts. Part One deals with the concept of human development (chapter one) and its application to the Lebanese situation (chapter two). Part Two of the report deals with various aspects of the theme Youth and Development. Chapter three gives a summary of the most important recommendations dealing with youth emanating from recent global meetings. It is intended as a reference point to the succeeding chapters. Chapter four analyses the demographic situation, particularly as it relates to youth, and offers detailed population projections. Chapter five discusses the labour situation, including its gender dimension, and conditions of work. It discusses in particular the problem of unemployment among youth and the duration of job search for them. Chapter six analyses the growth of education during the past twenty-five years, principally in terms of enrollment and illiteracy, and also discusses the education system, the quality of education and its relevance to market demand, and the demands of good citizenship. Chapter seven relates to questions of family formation such as the age at first marriage, the celibacy among young women, and their effect on family structure. Chapter nine, finally, deals with the question public participation of youth, including their participation in political activities, confessionality among youth and the issue of social participation. The Statistical Annex at the end of the Report consists of a database of an internally consistent set of data covering a wide spectrum of economic and social statistics relevant to human development in general and youth issues in particular.

There are many reasons for choosing youth as the theme of this Report. In addition to the demographic importance of this age group that constitutes close to one-fifth of the population, Lebanon is in the process of reconstruction after a long and destructive war. The process of reconstruction requires borrowing, that is, shifting some of the financial burden to future generations. It also requires a sustained effort on the part of the working population that will extend to more than one generation. In other words, a good deal of the burden and responsibility of the reconstruction of the country will have to fall on present day youth. Building the capacities of youth, keeping them from emigrating and involving them in decision-making through active public participation are, therefore, not only important in general, but of particular importance to the national situation and an important condition for the sustainability of the reconstruction and development effort underway in the country.

In order to insure the widest readership for the Report, it was designed in a flexible manner: First, there is a short executive summary at the beginning that contains also the major recommendations. This section is intended to give an overview of the contents of the Report and the areas in which action seems to be needed. Second, in each chapter of the report a number of sentences are highlighted separately from the text and in bold letters. These sentences give a quick idea of the content of the chapters and the sections in them. Third, boxes are placed in the text. Attention is drawn here to those entitled *In Their Own Word* in the chapters on youth. These boxes contain results of interviews with a wide variety of youth on subjects discussed in the different chapters expressed in the words of the young persons themselves. Finally, the main text of the report is written in scientific style and intended for the experts as well as the informed lay persons.