

PRESS RELEASE

UN-Habitat expands support to critical emergency response capacities of city facilities in Greater Beirut through funding from Polish Aid

Bachoura Fire Brigade and the Lebanese Civil Defense facilities in Jdeide and Bourj Hammoud are now equipped with renewable energy solutions for uninterrupted service delivery

Beirut, 24 January 2023. In line with its mission to promote a better urban future, UN-Habitat through funding from Polish Aid, has equipped the Bachoura Fire Brigade and the Lebanese Civil Defense facilities in Jdeide and Bourj Hammoud, with sustainable energy solutions. The installed solar photovoltaic systems on the rooftops of three public facilities provide a yearly supply of clean energy of up to 38,000 kilowatt-hours at the Bachoura Fire Brigade, up to 34,000 kilowatt-hours at the Civil Defense Centre in Jdeide and up to 19,000 kilowatt-hours at the Civil Defense Centre in Bourj Hammoud.

To mark the successful completion of the project, H.E. Przemysław Niesiołowski, Ambassador of Poland to Lebanon, and Taina Christiansen, Head of the UN-Habitat Lebanon Country Programme, visited the three public facilities and met with firefighters in their duty stations.

The project entitled “Improving living conditions by promoting renewable energy in public and non-profit social and health institutions in the Greater Beirut metropolitan area,” funded by Polish Aid, was implemented by UN-Habitat and Polish Centre for International Aid (PCPM). It installed solar panels on three public facilities in Greater Beirut: Bachoura Fire Brigade and the Lebanese Civil Defense facilities in Jdeide and Bourj Hammoud, providing them with access to renewable energy while lighting surrounding streets to ensure safety, security and uninterrupted emergency response and operations.

“We value the support that the Embassy of Poland and UN-Habitat are providing to Lebanese cities and public facilities, enabling them to remain operational during these difficult times. As fire brigade and civil defense centres are at the forefront of emergencies, supporting their abilities to respond to emergencies enhances people’s safety,” said Judge Marwan Abboud, Governor of Beirut.

“In continuation to the fruitful cooperation of Polish Aid with UN-Habitat in funding successful projects in Lebanon, Poland provided additional financial contribution with the aim of promoting renewable energy in the Greater Beirut area. In 2022-2023, through funding from Polish Aid, UN-Habitat and PCPM implemented a project of installation of photovoltaic systems on the rooftops of three fire stations. Independent, renewable power sources will make the operations of the

brave firefighters more efficient in providing various services to the benefit of local communities. We are proud to mark the completion of the project today,” said H.E. Przemysław Niesiołowski, Ambassador of Poland to Lebanon.

“With the newly installed sustainable energy system, our firefighters will continue to succeed in their missions, and the facility as well as the surrounding streets have now access to 24 hours of uninterrupted power supply. We are grateful for Polish Aid and UN-Habitat’s contribution, allowing for better response in rescue missions to protect the people of Lebanon,” said Colonel Maher El Ajouz, Chief of the Beirut Fire Brigade centres.

The Head of the Training Department in the Civil Defense, Mr. Nabil Salhani, representing Brigadier General Raymond Khattar, Director General of the Civil Defense, said: "This project has contributed to enhancing the service of firefighters working in the Jdeide and Bourj Hammoud centres, and has motivated them to continue to perform their humanitarian and national duties - reflecting positively on the security and safety of residents. The Directorate of Civil Defense commends this valuable initiative, achieved thanks to UN-Habitat, that is working towards a bright pollution-free future for our country.”

“As Lebanon continues to endure multi-faceted crises, it is our duty as UN-Habitat, to stand by its cities and public facilities to mitigate the negative impacts on its people. We are glad to see how this project is facilitating the preparedness of firefighters within the three centres to prevent, counter and respond to emergencies at any time.” said Ms. Taina Christiansen, Head of the UN-Habitat Lebanon Country Programme. “As climate change is affecting all cities around the world, it is the right time to start investing in renewable energy solutions for a better urban future,” she concluded.

Since its establishment, UN-Habitat Lebanon has been working effectively with partners and urban planning actors at the community, national and international levels to develop and implement programmes and interventions across the country that contribute to making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

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About the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

UN-Habitat works in over 90 countries supporting people in cities and human settlements for a better urban future. Working with governments and local partners, its high impact projects combine world-class expertise and local knowledge to deliver timely and targeted solutions. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development includes a dedicated Goal on cities, SDG 11 – to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

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