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PRESS RELEASE

Bourj Hammoud Municipality launches a new hotline for all its residents

Beirut, 6 April 2021 - *In an effort to support Bourj Hammoud residents overcome the current challenges and deteriorating living conditions, the Municipality of Bourj Hammoud launched new hotline service through a cost-effective and innovative solution.*

The hotline is based on WhatsApp application delivered in three languages, Arabic, Armenian and English, making it both affordable and accessible for residents. The hotline is funded by the European Union through the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the EU Madad Fund, and implemented by Bourj Hammoud Municipality. The initiative receives technical support from the Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project (MERP), a joint initiative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).

At a time of unprecedented challenges, including the Syrian displacement crisis, Lebanon's economic and health crises as well as the devastating impact of Beirut port explosion on the 4th of August, residents of Bourj Hammoud from all nationalities and backgrounds, will be able to benefit from the services supported through this line. As a start, the municipality will be able to respond to three main services: 1) Covid-19 related issues, 2) damaged housing following Beirut blast and 3) support for people with disabilities by relevant aid organizations.

Mardig Boughossian, Mayor of Bourj Hammoud municipality, said: "This is a humanitarian response project that should have been developed long time ago, but unfortunately the municipality didn't have the required resources. Thank you to all contributors who have helped and supported in successfully implementing the hotline."

He added: "The implementation of the hotline is very timely. I encourage Bourj Hammoud residents to use this service and to benefit from the health and social support provided."

Jose Luis Vinuesa Santamaria, Head of Sector Economy and Local Development, the European Union Delegation to Lebanon, said: "This initiative with the Municipality of Bourj Hammoud will ensure access to information and facilitation in the provision of assistance, particularly for those with disabilities."

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Note to editors

About the Municipal Empowerment and Resilience Project (MERP)

MERP is a joint project by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The Project is being implemented between 2019 and 2022 in partnership with the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM) and funded by the European Union (EU), through its Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the EU “Madad Fund”. The project aims to strengthen the long-term resilience of subnational authorities in Lebanon as well as host communities and displaced persons affected by the Syrian crisis. Learn more at <https://bit.ly/3hBveux>

About the European Union (EU)

The European Union supports Lebanon’s stability, independence and sovereignty, its prosperity and democratic order. It strives also to help protect its environment and natural resources by supporting sustainable enterprise and development. The European Union is also committed to the promotion and protection of human rights in Lebanon including defending gender equality, children’s rights and freedom of expression.

The EU Delegation in Lebanon represents the European Union to the Republic of Lebanon with the objective to maintain and develop mutual beneficial relations. It engages in political, social and economic development activities on behalf of the European Union and based on the most pressing needs of the country of Lebanon.

Learn more on the work of the EU in Lebanon at https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/lebanon_en or follow on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at @EUinLebanon

Learn more on the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis, the EU Madad Fund, at <https://ec.europa.eu/trustfund-syria-region/> or follow on Twitter at @EU_NEAR, on Facebook at EU Neighbourhood & Enlargement and on Instagram at EU_NEAR

About the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

UNDP is the leading United Nations organization fighting to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. Working with our broad network of experts and partners in 170 countries, we help nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and the planet.

Learn more at www.lb.undp.org or follow on Twitter at @UNDP_Lebanon, on Facebook at UNDP Lebanon and on Instagram at UNDP_Lebanon

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.

Learn more at www.unhabitat.org/lebanon or follow on Twitter at @UNHabitatLB, on Facebook at UN-Habitat Lebanon and on Instagram at UNHabitatLB