

JSSOR Youth Organization

Organisation in consultative status with United Nations Economic and Social Council Since 2014

**Call for input: OHCHR study on youth and human rights**

Lebanon has progressed further in the current years due to globalization, and now displays an HDI of 0.763. In 2015, literacy rates have reached 93.9%, showing that the the Lebanese populance is well educated and knowledgable. Despite this, Lebanon is suffering from unemployment rate of 24% due to complications in the educational system and economic regulations concerning the labor supply in the Lebanese market. This is primarily affecting the youth, considering they contribute up to 17% of Lebanon’s population.

Due to the impact of the Lebanese scout on their childhood, Lebanese youth have begun showing leadership skills. They have also been exposed to advancements in technological and educational fields, and have thereof developed social skills concerning emotional intelligence. These traits make the Lebanese youth responsible individuals capable of deciding their own future, and therefore, the future of their own country, by the age of eighteen. Decresing the voting age will thus result in shorteninh the socioeconomic gap Lebanon is currently facing.

We would like to recommend the following:

1. Encouraging the collaboration of the public and private sector on youth participation in Lebanon; the Ministry of Youth and Sports is encouraged to continue organizing dialogue workshops similar to the Municipality of Sidon National strategy in Lebanon, which was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2012. This was all within the framework of the "Technical Support to Youth Development in Lebanon", a project funded by the European Union, and further implemented by the British Council in cooperation with the American University of Beirut. Concerning matters in the private sector, there are very few youth empowerment NGOs that operate in Lebanon. One of these organizations is ULYP (Unite Lebanon Youth Project). This NGO aims to educate the youth and bring forth change in Lebanon. By collaborating with the public sector, organizations such as ULYP will be more effective in encouraging youth participation.
2. Engaging the Lebanese government with the implementation of the UNHCR 2250 resolution. Several attempts were made by the Lebanese youth to raise this issue until finally reaching a conclusion. With the help of the Lebanese Foundation of Permanent Civil Peace in 2016, a number of youth advocates visited the parliament to discuss issues such as unemployment, youth quotas, and participation in local and national elections. However, more of these attempts are required for adapting further laws regarding the wellfare of the youth. The implementation of UNHCR 2250 in Lebanon would facilitate the contribution of the youth in the decision making process.
3. Recommending the conduction of studies on the job market, and the implementation of governmental policies that protect youth from discrimination in order to limit youth unemployment. Unemployment in Lebanon causes skilled youth to immigrate, leading to brain drain in the country. This means that Lebanon will soon run out of people that are talented and skilled enough to innovate and inject change in the country. Compared to other countries, Lebanon has high costs relative to a freshly graduated individual’s salary. This furthermore encourages them to study and work abroad. Another challenge the youth face is discrimination in employment. According to the Daily Star newspaper, a report on job interviews and search websites demonstrated various types of discrimination. Lebanon has become accustomed to the widespread reliance on “wasta” (the use of connections and nepotism). Due to this, the nearest thing Lebanon has to security legislation concerning discrimination is a draft law protecting identity privacy that has been awaiting further action for seven years. This conveys to the Lebanese youth that the only place they can reach with fair job opportunities is abroad.

According to Lebanese Minister, Ziyad Baroud, almost 300,000 new voters would be added to the polls if the voting age is lowered from 21 to 18 years. Rallies and protests are the only means the Lebanese youth can express themselves politically, short of violence and acts of terrorism. However, if the voting age were to be lowered to 18, these youth would be able to engage in the democratic life, and thus practice their rights and advocate for what they think is best for their country.

Such actions will allow the youth to express themselves in a way that would contribute to lowering terrorism and acts that disturb peace in the country, and instead promote peaceful relations.

In conclusion, enacting and legalizing UNHCR 2250 will help contribute to the wellbeing of Lebanon. It will help advocate peace and tranquility, and urge politicians to give the youth a louder voice in decision making and peacefully enable them to contribute in it.