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## Official Launching of the Regional Dialogue on “Counter-trafficking Response in Humanitarian Settings Across the Levant Region”

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**Themes:** Counter-Trafficking

**Beirut** – On the 16th of July 2019, the UN Migration Agency (IOM) in Lebanon launched the Regional Dialogue on “Counter-trafficking Response in Humanitarian Settings Across the Levant Region”, under the patronage of the President of the Council of Ministers, H.E. Mr. Saad Hariri, and with the support of the U.S. Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons (J/TIP).

The regional dialogue will be held over a period of two days, the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2019, and will bring together Government officials and policymakers at senior technical levels; representatives from various UN agencies and diplomatic missions; representatives from non-governmental organizations and international organizations involved in counter-trafficking and humanitarian response; and representatives from the Global Protection Cluster; in order to exchange experiences and good practices on the identification of victims of trafficking and their provision with assistance, applying a human rights and gender-sensitive approach.

The regional dialogue aims at exploring practices and challenges in identifying and assisting victims of trafficking in the Levant region, in addition to providing (intra)regional policy perspectives and possible actionable steps forward for improving counter-trafficking responses and the protection of victims in Levant countries.

“Trafficking in persons is a problem that cannot be solved without partnership on all levels,” said Ms. Roueida El Hage, the Regional Representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the Middle East and North Africa. “Only by enhancing our cooperation, opening avenues of dialogue and building on each other’s knowledge and abilities can we hope to stand in the way of these violations,” she added.

Mr. Fawzi Al-Zioud, Head of IOM Office in Lebanon, pointed out that “IOM has organized this regional dialogue to build a stronger partnership against trafficking in persons to effectively respond to this



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crime, provide basic victim services and increase policy advocacy across the Levant. This dialogue will involve experts and practitioners from Governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, academia, UN agencies and development partners.”

Representing the President of the Council of Ministers, H.E. Mr. Richard Kouyoumjian, Minister of Social Affairs testified “through this dialogue, we are interested in exploring the role of humanitarian workers in supporting the identification of victims of human trafficking in the context of crises and ensuring victims’ access to additional assistance and protection programs.”

The dialogue will be informed by previous national consultation processes that took place in Iraq in December 2018, in Jordan in January 2019, in Lebanon in September 2018 and in Turkey in February 2019; past initiatives convened by the Anti-trafficking Task Team, in addition to available resources, such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and IOM global Standards Operating Procedures (SOPs) on identification and referral of victims of trafficking, and other relevant international tools including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Human Trafficking.

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