Lebanon - 2019 Multidimensional Poverty Index – Press Release

The Central Administration for Statistics (CAS) together with the World Bank has developed the first official Multidimensional Poverty Index for Lebanon using the nationally representative 2018-2019 Labor Force and Household Living Conditions Survey. The index is derived from 19 indicators across five dimensions which are education, health, financial security/well-being, basic infrastructure and living standards.

The Lebanon Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) aims to complement monetary measures of poverty with non-monetary measures of deprivations. This is based on the notion that poverty is not simply about a person or household having low income but encompasses a broader set of factors such as lack of clean water or electricity, poor quality of work or limited schooling.

The 2019 MPI for Lebanon reveals that 53.1 percent of all the residents in Lebanon were multidimensionally poor as they were deprived in over 25 percent of the indicators. The extreme poor, where residents are deprived in more than 50 percent of the indicators, amount to 16.2 percent of the population.

The largest contributors to national MPI-poverty are deprivations in health insurance (24.8 percent), followed by school attainment (18.3 percent) and further along by low-security work (9.7 percent). When aggregating by dimensions, the largest contributor to deprivation is the health dimension (30.2 percent), followed by employment (25.8 percent) and education (25.3 percent). The living standards and basic infrastructure dimensions contributed 13 percent and 6 percent respectively.

Across the eight governorates, *Akkar* and *Bekaa* are the poorest, while the greatest intensity of poverty among the MPI-poor is experienced in *Beirut*. In other words, while one is less likely to be MPI-poor in Beirut, the poor in Beirut are more likely to experience greater deprivation that in other governorates.

Across age-groups, the highest incidence of multidimensional poverty occurs among 66.8 percent of children, ages 0-4 years**.** This is a common finding in other countries, highlighting the vulnerability of households with young children. Particular to Lebanon, the absence of health insurance contributes the most to MPI-poverty across age groups followed by low school attainment.

The 2018-2019 data used in constructing the new MPI predates the start of Lebanon's current economic and financial crisis and does not take into account the implication of the subsequent developments namely the COVID-19 pandemic and the Port of Beirut explosion on people's welfare. Looking ahead, the 2019 MPI will form a baseline against which future MPIs can be compared, as new data are generated on the evolving conditions of individuals and households in the country.