

## Universal Periodic Review

(51<sup>st</sup> Session)

### Contribution of UNESCO to Compilation of UN information

#### Lebanon

#### I. RATIFICATION OF UNESCO CONVENTIONS

| <i>Title</i>   | <i>Date of ratification, accession, acceptance, approval or succession</i> | <i>Declarations /reservations</i>                     | <i>Recognition of specific competences of treaty bodies</i> | <i>Reference to the rights within UNESCO's fields of competence</i> |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972)     | Ratification on 3 February 1983  |   |   | Right to take part in cultural life                                 |
| Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003)                 | Acceptance on 8 January 2007   |   |   | Right to take part in cultural life                                 |
| Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) | Not ratified   |   |   |   |
| Convention against Discrimination in Education 1960  | 27 October 1964  | Reservation to this Convention shall not be permitted |   | Right to education  |

#### II. REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS AND IMPLEMENTATION

##### A. RIGHT TO EDUCATION

##### Discrimination in education (UNESCO consultations)

1. Lebanon did submit a report to the 10th consultations on the implementation of the Convention and Recommendation against Discrimination in Education but did

not for the 11th consultation.

#### Constitution and main education law(s)

2. The [Constitution](#) does not explicitly guarantee the right to education (article 10) but it contains a principle of non-discrimination (preamble and a principle of equality (article 7).
3. Apart from the [Law No. 150/2011](#), which guarantees the right to education for Lebanese citizen of school age, no legal disposition guaranteeing the right to education for all or a principle of non-discrimination in education has been identified.
4. [Law No. 686/1998](#) and [Law No. 150/2011](#) (amending Art. 49 of Decree No. 134/1959) establish free and compulsory basic education for Lebanese children only. [Law No. 150/2011](#) mandates 9 years of compulsory education (primary and lower secondary) for Lebanese children. Public education is free for 12 years (primary and secondary) for Lebanese citizens. Law No. 150/2011 guarantees free basic education; upper secondary is tuition-free in practice. No legal disposition guaranteeing free and compulsory pre-primary education has been identified.

#### Legal age of marriage

5. In Lebanon, in the absence of a civil code governing marriage, personal status is governed by the 18 religious communities. The minimum age for marriage is thus set by the various religious authorities of each community. According to the [Joint CEDAW-CRC General Recommendation/Comment](#), child marriage, also referred to as early marriage, is any marriage where at least one of the parties is under 18 years of age.

#### Corporal punishment

6. Decision No. 1130/m/2001 of 10/9/2001 on the internal organization of children's schools and basic education in government schools provides that "Employees in the education sector shall not impose any form of corporal punishment on students or address verbal retribution to them that is humiliating and against the principle of education and personal dignity" (article 41). This prohibition was later reinforced by the April 2014 amendment to Article 186 of the Penal Code, which removed the exemption for teachers. However, the law still permits certain forms of violence under parental or customary discipline, and a full prohibition is not yet explicitly enshrined.

#### Minimum age of employment

7. The [Code of Labour](#) of Lebanon, as of 2010, sets the minimum age of employment at 13 years old (section 22). Although, it was reported that [Act No. 536 of 24 July 1996](#) increased the minimum age at 14 years, this is not reflected in

the Code of Labour.

8. According to ILO Convention 138 (Minimum age convention) “The minimum age [for admission to employment or work] shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years. However, the minimum age can be lowered to 14 years under certain circumstances” (article 4).

#### Enrolment rates

9. Most recent UIS available data for the enrollment rates is as follows:

|       | Pre-primary education (net) (2023) | Primary education (gross) (2023) | Secondary education (gross)(2023) | Tertiary education       |
|-------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Girls | 72.54%                             | 77.43%                           | 66.74%                            | No recent data available |
| Boys  | 70.54%                             | 78.95%                           | 59.17%                            | No recent data available |
| Total | 71.56%                             | 78.20%                           | 62.83%                            | No recent data available |

#### Investment in education

10. According to UIS data, in 2020, the government expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP was 2.44, and 9.90% of the total government expenditure.

#### Quality inclusive education

11. During the last cycle, Lebanon was recommended to ensure quality education for all (150.210 and 150.248). In that regard, a [paper on good practices for transforming education](#) read that “Lebanon’s 2025 education strategy aims to provide equal opportunities for vulnerable children – both Lebanese and refugees – through government-funded tuition for grades K to 9 and a ‘Cash for Education’ programme that assists with non-tuition expenses, benefiting about 90,000 students from the most vulnerable groups in public schools. This financial support of 15 to 20 USD per child per month over two consecutive years will help mitigate the economic pressures that often drive families towards short-term solutions like child labour or early marriage for girls.” The Ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon also issued the [National Policy On Inclusive Education for Children with Special Needs in Lebanon](#) in 2023. The strategic goals of this policy include the development of “structures at different levels for parent and community involvement in creating school communities that provide high-quality education for all children and young people” and the development of monitoring and quality assurance systems and structures.

## **B. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION**

## Constitutional and Legislative framework

12. Under Article 13 of the Constitution of Lebanon, freedom of expression and of the press are guaranteed within the limits established by law.<sup>1</sup>
13. The Lebanese print media operate under provisions of the Press and Publications law adopted in 1962 and broadcasting media are regulated by the Audiovisual Media Law of 1994.
14. Defamation is considered a criminal offence under the Lebanese Penal Code, which carries a maximum sentence of two years. “Defamation” and “libel” are also not well defined under current Lebanese law.
15. Insulting the Lebanese President, flag, or national emblem is also a criminal offense under Article 384 of the Lebanese Penal Code.<sup>2</sup> Blasphemy is also illegal under Article 473 of the Lebanese Penal Code and offenders could face a maximum of 1 year.<sup>3</sup>
16. In 2017, Lebanon adopted the Right to Access Information Law.<sup>4</sup>
17. In 2024, UNESCO provided technical support to the Ministry of Information and the Lebanese Parliament to draft a new media law. Following a nation-wide consultation with multi-stakeholders (journalists, academia, civil society, parliamentarians, media institutions, syndicates, the EU, and the UN), the proposed media law is now under final review by the Administrative and Justice Parliamentarian Committee, before being presented to the General Assembly for voting.
18. The Telecommunications Law 431 was adopted on 23 July 2002.<sup>5</sup>

## Implementation of legislation

19. Under Lebanese decree no. 6830, the Lebanese Ministry of Information supervises and regulates the broadcasting sector.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.presidency.gov.lb/English/LebaneseSystem/Documents/Lebanese%20Constitution.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See ‘Lebanon Penal Code 1943’ at [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/document/lbn/1943/lebanon\\_penal\\_code.html](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/document/lbn/1943/lebanon_penal_code.html)

<sup>3</sup> See ‘Lebanon Penal Code 1943’ at [https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/document/lbn/1943/lebanon\\_penal\\_code.html](https://sherloc.unodc.org/cld/document/lbn/1943/lebanon_penal_code.html)

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.rti-rating.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Lebanon-Right-to-Access-Information-Law.2017.ENG\\_.pdf](https://www.rti-rating.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Lebanon-Right-to-Access-Information-Law.2017.ENG_.pdf)

[https://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/2012\\_RDAAIMNA\\_ATIMNARegion\\_EN.pdf](https://www.transparency.org/files/content/activity/2012_RDAAIMNA_ATIMNARegion_EN.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.tra.gov.lb/SubPage.aspx?pageid=102>

<sup>6</sup> See their official website at <https://www.ministryinfo.gov.lb/en/2707>

20. Based on the proposed new media law that was supported by UNESCO (expected to be adopted by the end of 2025), a new National Media Authority will be created for supervising and regulating the whole media sector.
21. The Telecommunications Law 431 establishes the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority, an independent public institution assigned to liberalize, regulate, and develop telecommunications in Lebanon. The Authority's Board is appointed by the Minister and is composed of a full-time Chairman and four full-time Board Members. Their five-year term of office is both non-renewable and non-extendable.

### Safety of Journalists

22. Since 2006, when systematic monitoring began, UNESCO has recorded eleven killings of journalists in Lebanon on its Observatory of Killed Journalists.<sup>7</sup> All cases are ongoing or unresolved according to information provided by the government.<sup>8</sup>

## **C. THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS**

23. The Constitution of Lebanon does not contain any reference to the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
24. Lebanon has acceded to the ICESCR, but it has not ratified its Optional Protocol.
25. In its 2020 (Third Cycle) National Report, Lebanon did not mention science-related rights or policies, although it reported initiatives involving technology in education and justice, including digital learning platforms and the introduction of technology into juvenile courts. No explicitly science-related Recommendations were made, nor were any Recommendations made in respect of the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits or its inherent rights such as scientific freedom. Lebanon did not submit its national report on the implementation of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers for the first consultation covering the period from 2017 to 2021, nor has it yet done so for the second consultation from 2021 to 2025.

## **III. RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. RIGHT TO EDUCATION**

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<sup>7</sup> Accessed on 15 May 2025.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.unesco.org/en/safety-journalists/observatory/country-overview?country=ec9093a0-8c0a-51bf-96ad-d94c985155df&hub=72609>

26. Lebanon should be encouraged to:
- i. Consider enshrining the right to education within the Constitution.
  - ii. Enshrine the right to education for all within the legislation and legally prescribe discrimination in education.
  - iii. Introduce legislation to make pre-primary education compulsory for at least one year, and a legislation to make pre-primary education free for at least one year.
  - iv. Amend the legislation to ensure that the minimum age of marriage is 18 years old without exception.
  - v. Legally proscribe corporal punishment in education settings.
  - vi. Raise the minimum age of employment to at least 15 in accordance with international human rights law.
  - vii. Strengthen efforts to increase the percentage of boys/girls in pre-primary/primary/secondary/tertiary education.
  - viii. Increase efforts to finance education, by allocating at least 4%-6% of GDP to education; and/or at least 15%-20% of public expenditure to education, in accordance with international benchmarks.
  - ix. Continue efforts to ensure the right to inclusive education for children without discrimination based on nationality or immigration status.
  - x. Continue to ensure regular reporting to UIS on education data, especially on tertiary education.
  - xi. Regularly submit comprehensive national reports for the periodic consultations on UNESCO's education-related standard-setting instruments, and notably on the Convention against Discrimination in Education.
  - xii. Share with UNESCO any relevant information to update its country profile on UNESCO's [Observatory on the Right to Education](#) and [HerAtlas](#).

## **B. RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF OPINION AND EXPRESSION AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION**

27. The Government is encouraged to continue investigating unresolved cases of killed journalists and to voluntarily report on the status of judicial follow-up to UNESCO and to the SDG 16.10.1 monitoring processes.
28. The Government is recommended to decriminalize defamation and place it within civil defamation legislation that is in accordance with international standards.
29. The Government is encouraged to assess the system of supervision of the broadcasting sector in order to ensure that this process is transparent and independent.

## **C. RIGHT TO FREELY PARTICIPATE IN THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY (CULTURAL RIGHTS)**

30. Lebanon is encouraged to ratify the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005). The UNESCO Culture

Conventions promote access to and participation in cultural heritage and creative expressions and, as such, are conducive to implementing the right to take part in cultural life as defined in article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In doing so, Lebanon is encouraged to facilitate the participation of communities, practitioners, cultural actors and NGOs from the civil society as well as vulnerable groups (minorities, migrants, refugees, young people, indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities), and to ensure that equal opportunities are given to women and girls to address gender disparities.

#### **D. THE RIGHT TO SHARE IN SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENT AND ITS BENEFITS**

31. Lebanon is invited to continue its efforts to ensure the full and comprehensive implementation and monitoring of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers in accordance with the relevant Decisions of UNESCO's Executive Board (216 EX/Decision 45 of May 2023). In that context, Lebanon is invited to engage with UNESCO's Program on the promotion of scientific freedom and the safety of scientists and support the related Call to Action in line with the Recommendation and decisions of UNESCO's General Conference (42 C/Resolution 26 of November 2023) and Executive Board (219 EX/Decision 30 of March 2024). The Call to Action underlines the need to protect science and scientific researchers, and to allow for a free and safe science ecosystem where there is trust in science and where scientific evidence informs decision making. UNESCO stands ready to support Lebanon in developing and nurturing its science ecosystem, and protecting its scientific researchers, including through the incorporation of appropriate legal and administrative measures in line with international law. Lebanon is invited to collaborate directly with UNESCO, through its Secretariat and specialised Sectors, for that purpose.
32. Against this background, Lebanon is invited to consider the following:
  - i. Submit a national report to the 2nd consultation on the implementation of the Recommendation on Science and Scientific Researchers in line with the Circular Letter by UNESCO's Director-General (CL/4448 of 28 November 2024) and the guidelines contained therein.
  - ii. Explore ways to strengthen the status of the right to share in scientific advancement and its benefits in its legal system, including in its Constitution and any other appropriate legal and policy frameworks.
  - iii. When implementing measures to guarantee the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the right to information, and the right to education, include within those measures the freedoms indispensable for scientific research, and access to scientific education at all levels.
  - iv. Expand input on issues covered by UNESCO's Recommendation in its national report to the UPR – particularly providing information about the implementation of the right to science and scientific freedom, including the latter in its report addressing more broadly freedom of opinion and expression. This will allow further discussions thereon at the Human Rights Council and the formulation of specific recommendations.
  - v. Ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR.