

**Statement by**  
**H.E. Mr. Hadi Hachem , Chargé d'affaires, a.i**  
**of the**  
**Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations**  
**at the UNICEF Annual Session**  
**New York, 11 June 2024**

Thank you, Mr. President,

And thank you Executive Director Russel for your intervention.

At a time of continued aggression against my country, children in Lebanon are still paying a heavy price.

According to the latest numbers, and since October 8:

- 12 children have been killed
- More than 75 children have been injured
- 30,000 children have been displaced from their homes
- More than 70 schools are currently closed, affecting around 20,000 students and significantly affecting their education.

Mr. President,

Behind these tragic facts and numbers, the trauma that our children have to live with, is unimaginable. Let me share with you

one example that perfectly, and unfortunately I should say, describe the fear and trauma developed in our children:

On May 23rd, in Southern Lebanon, an Israeli strike hit a school bus packed with 18 little children going to their school. The windscreen of the bus shattered, wounding 3 children.

From his hospital bed, one of the children, 11-year-old Mohammed Nasser, said

"We put our schoolbags on our heads", fearing more strikes.

This is the sheer reality of many of our children, that no numbers, no figures, and no statistics can properly capture.

Mr. President,

Lebanon values the role and mission of UNICEF and considers it a long-standing partner.

Last week, the Ministry of Public Health, in partnership with UNICEF, launched 2 initiatives.

The first one: the 'Heal through Play' project, in partnership with Denmark and the LEGO Foundation, aims at providing the most vulnerable children with safe spaces and tools for children to play, learn, and express themselves.

The second one: the RISING initiative is a national programme to address immediate and underlying causes of malnutrition and

early childhood developmental deprivations and impairments among the most vulnerable children in Lebanon.

In addition, last March, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in partnership with UNICEF launched the School Medical Screening program to connect Public Schools with Primary Health Care Centers.

Mr. President,

As we are fully immersed here in NY in the preparations for the Summit of the Future, we ought to ask ourselves:

What future are we building for our children?

What world are we leaving to our children?

Let us pursue our commitment and bolster our collective action to ensure that the legacy we leave behind is one of peace, prosperity and sustainability.

We owe it to our children to leave them with a world better than the one we live in today.

I thank you.