

Excellency, President of the Republic of Lebanon

General Michel Aoun,

Excellency, Inayat Ezzedine, Minister of Administrative Development

You Excellencies the Ministers and MPs

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

It is a great honor to be with you today to represent the World Bank Group in this important discussion on the digital transformation of the Government of Lebanon.

These are extraordinary times. Mounting pressures, such as large migration flows, increased fragility and violence, and disruptive technology, have changed the world in which we live. Many of the pressures we face today are not new – they have been mounting for some time now; but the magnitude, the pace and the combination of these pressures are unprecedented.

At the same time, the ability of governments to respond effectively to these pressures and mitigate their effects on citizens is being questioned. Over the past years, citizens' trust in their governments has plummeted in many countries that had previously enjoyed high levels of confidence and legitimacy. In this complex environment, the World Bank's attention to governance and institutions as a fundamental driver of development effectiveness has grown and expanded its ambition over time.

One of the key areas of Governance that the Bank is working on, together with governments across the world, is e-Governance and in particular, the digital transformation of government.

The World is in the midst of a fourth industrial revolution. Digital advances and disruptive technology, which are at the heart of this revolution, are changing the world in which we live. For citizens, recent breakthroughs are leading to high expectations that Governments will be at the forefront of these changes by embracing new ways of doing business that will improve peoples' lives. Recently, the WB have accompanied a number of emerging governments– including Malaysia, Vietnam, and Moldova - in their digital transformation journey.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In what way can the digital transformation of government make an impact you may ask? Well, Digital Transformation of government provides an enabling environment for the delivery of more effective government policy and earning broader consensus. The benefits which may emerge from an investment in digital transformation may include, but are not limited to:

- i) better services, that are available to everyone;
- ii) greater transparency and reduced corruption, which restores citizens' trust;
- iii) the creation of growth and jobs through the establishment of a digital economy
- iv) a positive business climate and greater competition
- v) more efficient public administration and reduction in Government expenditure

The achievement of these benefits is at the core of why the World Bank Group is very much committed to helping Lebanon's digital transformation drive. Indeed, these benefits are at the heart of the World Bank Group's mission—reducing poverty and securing prosperity for all.

The World Bank has earmarked more than 1.4 billion US dollars to support Lebanon's developmental agenda. Grants, loans, concessional financing have been put at the Government's disposal. This mix of financing facilities is targeting the health, education, water and transport sectors. We are supporting a national program to create jobs, quality jobs, for the citizens while spurring economic growth in a country that is performing well below its potential.

More effective governance, through digital transformation will maximize the impact that this investment for the benefit of the Lebanon and help accelerate the advancement of improved service delivery and productivity, transparency, and citizens engagement.

The Government of Lebanon's current efforts for leveraging digital technologies represent an unprecedented opportunity to reinvent itself, accelerate reforms, and enable an inclusive and sustainable development model for the country and making the move to build a regional best practice.

Lebanon has a high digital entrepreneurship capacity, a well-educated young population, and vibrant diaspora. These are important assets that can accelerate the

digital transformation journey and enable the country to leapfrog other emerging economies.

Digitally mature countries like UK, Estonia, and Singapore have realized the value of Digital Transformation and have successfully progressed to deliver digital dividends to their citizens. Today, we are pleased to join you in the launch of the new Government Digital Transformation Strategy, an important milestone towards enabling an effective, efficient and transparent modern government – an imperative requirement to accelerate economic growth, promote sustainability, and enhance citizen satisfaction in Lebanon.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, allow me to extend my sincere appreciation to the Minister of OMSAR for organizing this conference to promote the Digital Transformation of Government in Lebanon, an initiative which can contribute significantly to h improving the lives of all. and helping the achievement of lasting stability and prosperity in Lebanon.

Thank you