



# Charité Berlin World Health Summit

**World Health Summit**  
October 20th – 22nd, 2013  
Berlin, Germany

## **World Health Summit Berlin 2013, October 22 Joint Call for Emergency Action in the MENA Region**

The civil war that has been raging in Syria has resulted in massive population movements both within the country, as well as into Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt. As of May 2013, UNHCR had registered 1.5 million refugees, most likely an underestimate at that time, and probably many more ever since, mainly into neighboring countries of Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. At the current rate of entry, UNHCR is estimating that by the end of 2013, there would be more than 1 million refugees in Jordan alone, corresponding to about 20 to 25 percent of the Jordanian population, putting an enormous strain on the economy in general and the health and education systems in particular, threatening country's impressive achievements in health and human development and poverty reduction. On one hand, diseases that had disappeared such as polio, or had been under control such as measles and tuberculosis have begun to reappear. On the other hand, the downward pressure on the wages as a result of increased competition for unskilled jobs due to influx of refugees, and higher inflation due to increased demand for food and commodities at a time of severe macroeconomic and fiscal challenges have seriously worsened the socio economic situation and severely strained public provision of health, education and other social services in Jordan.

The situation in Lebanon is not any better. It is estimated that about 1 million Syrian refugees have crossed the border, a large majority of them living in host communities rather than in refugee camps, competing for the already stretched public services, be they healthcare, education or social safety programs. According to a recent World Bank study that assessed the socio-economic impact of the Syrian conflict on the economy, the real GDP growth in Lebanon has been cut by 2.9 percentage points from 4.4 percent down to 1.5 percent in 2013. The overall impact on the fiscal situation has been very profound: a reduction of government revenues of about US\$ 1.5 billion and increase in expenditures of about US\$ 1.1 billion for an overall estimated deficit of 2.6 percent overall in one year. The unemployment rate has doubled to more than 20 percent and more than 170,000 Lebanese pushed into poverty and the existing 1 million poor pushed into deeper poverty. The surging demand for public health and healthcare services seriously compromised access to and quality of health care. In monetary terms, the additional health care costs in 2013 borne by the Lebanese government would reach about US\$ 92 million, and given the low prospects of the refugee crises abating any time soon, Lebanon would need to secure about another

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Berliner Bank

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US\$431 million just to be able to restore the provision of public health and healthcare services to the pre-crisis level.

While the international donor community, UN Agencies and the World Bank have responded both in kind and financially, there still is much more to be done by all, including the global health community in general, and the constituents of the World Health Summit in particular who strongly believe that health is an inalienable human right, and that health and wellbeing should be sought and pursued in all policies, especially in times of violent and armed conflict and of post conflict, through evidence-based yet value-laden dialogue and collaboration. The Syrian refugee crisis reminds us all once again that the time is of the essence for us to stay true to our mission, and advocate for solidarity and financial and humanitarian support to countries such as Lebanon and Jordan who have so generously kept their borders open to provide relief to millions of Syrian refugees.

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World Bank: PROJECT APPRAISAL DOCUMENT ON A LOAN IN THE AMOUNT OF US\$ 150 MILLION TO THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN FOR AN EMERGENCY PROJECT TO ASSIST JORDAN PARTIALLY MITIGATE IMPACT OF SYRIAN CONFLICT (*Report No: 78129-JO*), July 3, 2013, Washington DC, USA.

World Bank: LEBANON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE SYRIAN CONFLICT (*Report No: 81098-LB*), September 20, 2013, Washington, DC, USA.

World Bank: LEBANON ROADMAP OF PRIORITY INTERVENTIONS FOR STABILIZATION FROM THE SYRIAN CONFLICT, *October 12, 2013, Washington DC, USA.*