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Minister of Finance Ali Hassan Khalil, received a delegation from the World Bank headed by the World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa, Mr. Hafez Ghanem. They discussed, in the presence of the Minister's Advisor, Wassim Mansouri, the joint projects between Lebanon and the World Bank.

After the meeting, Ghanem stated, “the partnership between the World Bank and Lebanon is strong and solid,” adding that “our projects that are currently being implemented in Lebanon are worth around one billion four hundred million dollars.

We discussed with H.E. the Minister of Finance the existing projects of the World Bank in Lebanon and talked about the new projects that the WB can finance in Lebanon.

We also discussed the projects for the coming year and which are worth around 800 million dollars.

Therefore, the WB is committed to its partnership with Lebanon and is very pleased by the results and its work with the Lebanese government.

Concerning existing projects, priority is mainly given to those related to social issues, particularly in the fields of education, health, transport and roads.

As for future projects, they will focus on areas of infrastructure. We have a project worth around 200 million dollars and we are preparing projects in the field of transportation.”

He also added, “I spoke with Minister Khalil about how to attract the private sector to invest in infrastructure, especially in the energy field. We are, of course, working with Lebanon on financing and economic reform in order to attract investors and the private sector in these fields.”

Commenting on whether the WB feels comfortable toward the situation in Lebanon, Ghanem said, “our role is anchored in the field of economic development, and we are working with Lebanon to promote such development. We think that the most important goal for the government and

its partners such as the World Bank is to increase labor and employment opportunities, especially among the youth. All the activities that I have mentioned in education, health or infrastructure have a primary objective: increasing the rates of development and employment, in addition to giving greater opportunities for the youth in Lebanon.”