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## Khalil during the launching of the IoF's 2018 work plan: Rationalize spending and increase its effectiveness in order to avoid sliding into dangerous crises

*He stressed on the "leading role" played by his Ministry in "achieving financial security"*

Finance Minister Ali Hassan Khalil called, during a ceremony organized by the Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan (IoF) on Friday, to "rationalize spending and increase its effectiveness in order to avoid sliding into dangerous crises", warning that the "price of financial insecurity falls on the shoulders of future generations that often pay it double." Khalil, represented by Bsar, sponsored the IoF's ceremony closing its 2017 activities and launching its work plan for 2018. The event was attended by the Minister of State for Human Rights, Ayman Choucair, the Head of Central Inspection, Judge Georges Attieh, the First Deputy at the Moroccan Embassy, the President of METAC and representatives of the ministers of Justice, Defense, Energy and the Displaced, as well as representatives of MP Sami Gemayel, the Army Commander, General Security, ISF, State Security, Civil Defense and the French embassy. The President of the Higher Council of Customs, the DG of Customs, the DG of The General Directorate of Finance, the DG of the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre, in addition to a number of judges, director generals, advisors at the Ministry of Finance, private sector institutions and employees at the Ministry of Finance were also present.

In his speech that was read by Bsar, the Minister praised "The IoF's diligent efforts aiming to ensure adequate public service, modernization and openness to other administrations and the region."

He added: "It is true that the citizen has many demands, and he is right in doing so. It is also true that laws may sometimes hinder the aspirations to modernization, that administrative conditions and workloads may hamper the achievement of desired goals, and that we are facing critical economic, financial and security situations; however, your efforts and perseverance, along with the trust of partners and beneficiaries of the services of the ministry, have allowed us to overcome together a lot of difficulties and challenges."

He continued: "In 2017, despite all the difficult circumstances, our ministry accomplished great achievements; notably the e-services in taxes and real estate, especially since we are on the path toward modernization which results can be seen by the citizen. Indeed, we succeeded in getting the budget approved, with a set of tax procedures that restored balance to the financial situation. We have made sure that these procedures take into consideration the prevailing conditions for citizens and the economy, as well as the requirements of the salary adjustments."

He pointed out that the ministry "set the 2018 budget and the draft law on tax provisions related to petroleum activities, within deadlines," adding that "concerning the Administration of Tobacco and Tunbac, we ranked high in terms of quality and we have achieved progress at the level of manufacturing. Indeed, we have opened the most recent cutting-edge factory in the Middle East for sorting tobacco and expanded our manufacturing. As for customs, work is well under way there." Among the achievements, he also mentioned "the results of the IoF's work in training public servants, especially the network of financial officials, and its preparation of reports and specialized researches and guides for citizens on financial and tax topics."

He warned that the "price of financial insecurity falls on the shoulders of future generations that often pay it double. Therefore, everyone has to acknowledge the important future financial challenges and work on rationalizing spending and increasing its effectiveness to avoid sliding into dangerous crises by streamlining procedures, resorting to automation, strengthening skills and knowledge related to managing public finance: the citizen's money."

He stressed that "the Ministry of Finance is a key ministry in Lebanon and has a leading role to play in achieving financial security and all the officials at the ministry, each according to his position, are responsible of the financial performance in the country. They must remain alert, anticipating and coordinating, while opening to both the public and private sectors in order to overcome the crisis." He added: "We all have the responsibility to restore the value of public service and regulate the relationship between the State and the society in terms of effectiveness and respect of rights, in order to reinforce trust in the institutions and maintain the authority of the State."

He stated that "what is required today is concerted action within each department, office and administration and with international projects. We have to set up projects and solutions to face difficulties, while judiciously managing our work and having a clear vision and know-how to achieve the best results for the ministry and the country. Indeed, neither the human and financial resources, nor the current circumstances, allow us to waste time and energy."

He noted that the IoF, which completed 20 years of service in September 2016, is today a leading institution within the Ministry of Finance, capable of playing a central role in improving financial performance at the national level and in promoting economic and financial culture for the younger generation."

He added: "We will make sure to achieve this; indeed, we believe that government training institutes are essential for preparing and keeping pace with modernization projects. Moreover,

continuous learning is related to performance and to a capable State and has become one of its cornerstone. It is no longer acceptable, in our current situation, to assign employees at any governmental position, especially when it is related to managing public finance, if they are not prepared to professionally assume their responsibilities and subsequently bound to receive specialized and continuous training.

He pointed out that "the Ministry of Finance was among the first to establish a specialized institute which is a tool to implement the policies set by the Minister of Finance." He emphasized "the role of this institution and its position within the ministry, at the service of the State," indicating that the "IoF has contributed in a qualitative shift in performance at the level of both the Ministry and the Lebanese State as a whole, in addition to upholding the name of Lebanon in the Middle East and North Africa."

He concluded: "As the Minister of Finance and as the trustee of this Institute which activities are led according to my directives, allow me to applaud this institution as a center of expertise. I would like to call upon those who manage directorates, institutions and training centers in Lebanon, as well as the regional and international partner institutions, to benefit from the IoF and extend their cooperation to this noble institute."

### **Bsat's Speech**

In her speech, she addressed "the difficulties that accompanied the transformation of the Institute from a Lebanese-French cooperation project into a legally established institution within the Lebanese State, and the different opinions as to its position, role and integration with other institutions due to the different administrative cultures."

She stated: "We know that our country is going through a transitional period that will define our future and our relationship with our neighbors for decades to come. Our youth will demand that we provide them with administrations that are able to achieve a better service at a lower cost, administrations that are flexible, proactive and open.. just like them."

She considered that "for their expectations to be achieved, we must build a human capital, especially when it comes to the management of public finance", stressing the importance of "continuous preparation and training for those responsible of managing public finance, wherever they are, whether at the civil or military administrations, at public schools, municipalities or public institutions, regardless of their employment situation, i.e., substantive, interim, rotating, or other. This will prevent the management of public finance by unqualified individuals."

Bsat stressed also that "the IoF is capable of playing a central role in improving financial performance at the national level, but this requires clear legal texts according to which training is mandatory for all civil servants occupying a position related to public finance and stipulating conditions for the management of human resources working in this field."

She thanked Minister Khalil for his “continuous support to the IoF”, indicating that “his excellency never hesitates to meet the needs of the Institute because he realizes the importance of the role it plays.”

### **The IoF’s work plan**

The working team of the IoF presented the results of 2017, in terms of promotion of competencies in the management of public finance and contribution to the convergence between the Ministry and the citizen. The presentation revealed that the IoF organized 70 programs since the beginning of the year, with a total of 1718 participants who have joined more than 50,000 trainees over the past 20 years. The biggest share of the IoF’s activity (42%) was allocated to the Ministry of Finance, while the other most prominent beneficiaries were oversight agencies and public institutions, as well as the military and security forces, notably the Army, ISF, State and General Security and Civil Defense.

The 2018 work plan will follow up on the order that was restored to financial work, ensuring better planning and better management of public finance through a combination of programs related to the State’s budget, public procurement, taxation and economy.

The Institute is launching, for the first time, a series of programs on public-private partnerships that will pave the way for the implementation of the newly promulgated law and provide opportunities for growth and investment. The IoF is also organizing programs related to accounting and oversight "in order to reduce the gap in the preparation of accounts, enhance integrity and support oversight bodies in the performance of their duties". The Real Estate programs support the General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre "in taking exceptional responsibility in serving the people and their cases". The work plan also includes programs addressed to municipalities, senior cadres in the Lebanese administration and other programs related to automation and e-services.

### **Honorary Shields**

At the end of the ceremony, Bsar awarded honorary shields to the DG of the General Directorate of Finance, Alain Bifani, the DG of the GDLRC, Georges Marrawi, and the DG of the Régie, Eng. Nassif Seklawi.