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Finance Minister Dr. Ghazi Wazni and H.E. French ambassador to Lebanon, Bruno Boucher, launched on Wednesday, at Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan (Basil Fuleihan Institute of Finance), the “Senior Public Sector Officials Meetings: Leadership in Times of Crisis” program that is offered by the Institute, in partnership with the Ecole Nationale d'Administration and with the support of the French embassy in Lebanon, with the participation of 22 senior public sector officials ranging from Directors General, judges and high-ranking military and security officials.

Minister Wazni praised France for its steadfast stance “by Lebanon throughout its political and financial crises”, while Foucher stressed that the most important reforms that are currently needed by Lebanon are “the promotion of the independence of the Judiciary, the adoption of a new Public Procurement Law and the strengthening of the independence of oversight bodies in order to fight corruption”, considering that the implementation of these reforms will “clearly show the Lebanese the reform of the State”.

### **Wazni**

In his speech, Wazni expressed his pleasure to launch his first activity in the Ministry of Finance from the Basil Fuleihan Financial and Economic Institute, praising the "steadfast cooperation with France that has always

stood by Lebanon throughout its political and financial crises." He reminded that " since its establishment in 1996, the Institute was never reluctant to undertake its main mission: contributing to strengthening financial governance and developing competencies, especially in the management of public finance," noting that "this effort was not limited to developing capabilities in the Ministry of Finance, but also across the Lebanese State and even in the Arab region."

He stressed that the Ministry of Finance "relies a lot on the expertise of the Institute's team in providing support to the Ministry when implementing modernization projects and developing modern public policies, especially in modernizing the public procurement system". It also counts on the Institute's role "in developing human capabilities, particularly in public finance management at all staffing levels, in addition to its role in investing in partnerships and opening up to the world."

He also highlighted "the outstanding cooperation of the Institute with France, since after its establishment as a French-Lebanese project in 1996, the Institute has become today a distinguished partner of more than 21 French institutions, the most prominent of which is the National School of Administration in France (ENA)."

Minister Wazni noted that "the relationship between the Institute and the French partners is one of unconventional trust that managed, through dialogue and integration, to elaborate exceptional projects despite the complex and difficult environment and the volatile circumstances prevailing in Lebanon."

He considered that the Senior Public Sector Officials Meetings are "putting into practice this Lebanese-French cooperation," stating that, ever since they were launched in 2010 in partnership between the Institute and the ENA and with the support of the French embassy, these meetings have turned into a common space for a group of 116 participants, allowing them to benefit

from French expertise and exchange experiences in leadership and public finance management.

He added "Today, 22 new participants join this initiative under the important title of: Leadership in times of crisis. Here, I can only salute the commitment of those present with us and their initiative to delve deeper into crisis management techniques and tools."