

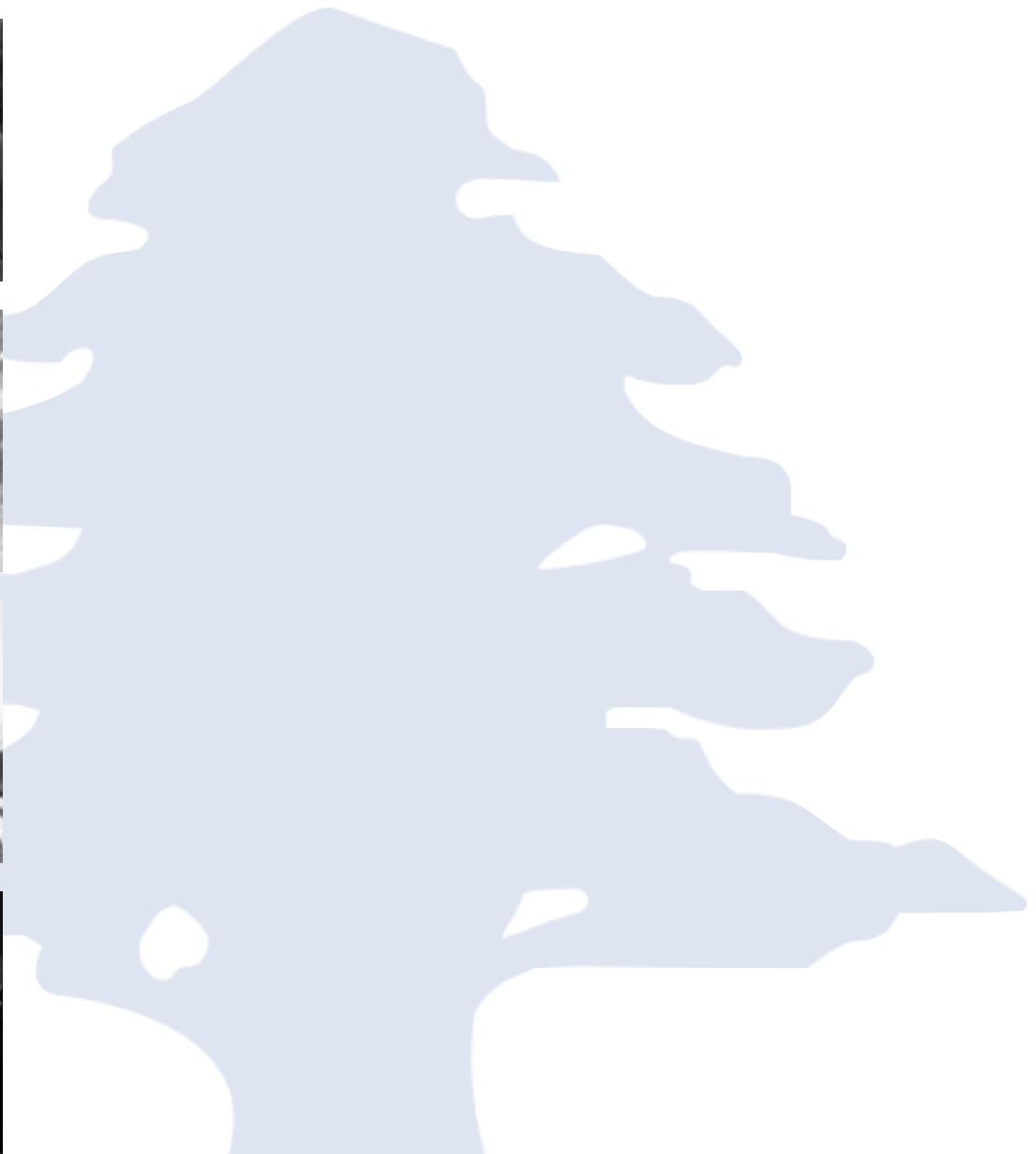


REPUBLIC OF LEBANON
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



ACTIVITIES OF

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY 2006





This report was prepared with the collaboration of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) at the Lebanese Parliament.



President's letter

It is my pleasure to address this letter at the occasion of the issuance, for the 4th consecutive year, of the National Assembly's 2006 annual report of activities, which is prepared by the parliamentary administration in collaboration with the UNDP project at the National Assembly. This year has experienced critical events at the national level some of which have given the Lebanese population a glimmer of hope that lit their way through the darkness whereas others were painful and tragic, increasing the suffering of the population. I mean by them consecutively the national dialogue sessions and the devastating Israeli aggression that destroyed Lebanon imposing an air and sea blockade under which the country had to live. Throughout this horrendous crisis, the Lebanese population's unity and solidarity were obvious. However, the scene of pain and suffering returned at the end of the year and prevailed once again on the scenes of dialogue and unity, with the assassination of our colleague Sheikh Pierre Gemayel. This second event lead to sharp divisions emerging in the political attitudes, disturbing divergences created among Lebanese, and many unprecedented violations of the Constitution. In addition, convulsions in the political discourse, where the use of unfamiliar vocabulary and phrases in communication, were recorded.

As I come across this painful scene that hurts me, I can only express the hope that Lebanon will eventually get out of this crisis and pray that all those who are lost return to the right track; and wish that all Lebanese decide to put their country's interest above all factional, partisan or individual interest.

We are all invited, wherever we are, to confront the dangers surrounding our solidarity and union in a spirit of responsibility and duty.

The content of the report, that covers the National Assembly, presidency, committees and Administration activities, is a great testimony on the continuity of the parliamentary activities despite the difficult conditions facing the country that had a negative impact on the Assembly's work and on all aspects of the public life in the country.

I would like to seize the opportunity of the issuance of this report to express my deepest regards to the National Assembly's administration and in particular to the UNDP project at the National Assembly for their efforts in completing the report and making it available to the public.

Beirut, February 2007

Nabih Berri

President of the National Assembly

CONTENTS

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE	3
INTRODUCTION	5
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ADMINISTRATION (NEW PARLIAMENT STRUCTURE)	6
ACTIVITIES ON ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT	10
OUTCOME OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR 2006	12
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES' WORK MECHANISM	12
THE 16 PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES	13
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES IN 2006	14
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES' SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS IN 2006	15
LAWS ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY IN 2006	16
LAW DISTRIBUTION FOR 2006	19
LAW DISTRIBUTION BY LEGISLATION THEMES	20
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OVERSIGHT	24
PARLIAMENTARY MECHANISMS OVER GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES	24
QUESTIONS AND INTERROGATIONS IN 2006	24
TABLE PRESENTING LIST OF QUESTIONS AND INTERROGATIONS SUBMITTED BY MPS	26
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DIPLOMACY	29
PARLIAMENTARY AND ARAB MEETINGS AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY	29
PRESIDENT'S DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES IN 2006	30
PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION VISITS ABROAD	44
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEES	49
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PUBLICATIONS	50

INTRODUCTION

The Lebanese political system, as defined by the Constitution, is a parliamentary system where the National Assembly has a special status as it takes its authority directly from the people through direct elections. Besides, it is a forum for national dialogue among the different communities, political currents and doctrinal affiliations. In addition, it represents the venue where the major decisions of the country are formulated and plays a decisive role in the emergence of other authorities. The

National Assembly elects the president of the Republic and conducts parliamentary consultations that lead to the appointment of the Prime Minister in charge of forming a new cabinet. The government cannot rule before it gains the confidence of the National Assembly and resigns when the parliament withdraws the vote of confidence. It also elects members of the Constitutional Council, the Audiovisual Higher Council and the Supreme Court that condemns the presidents and ministers.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



		Number of seats
September 1920- March 1922	Bureau	17
May 1925- End 1925	First Representative Council	30
July 1925- May 1926	Second Representative Council	16
May 1926- November 1927	Senate	46
November 1928- May 1929	First National Assembly	45
July 1929- May 1932	Second National Assembly	25
December 1932- June 1937	Third National Assembly	26
November 1937- May 1939	Fourth National Assembly	62
September 1943- April 1947	Fifth National Assembly	55
May 1946- March 1951	Sixth National Assembly	55
June 1951- May 1953	Seventh National Assembly	77
August 1953- August 1957	Eighth National Assembly	44
August 1957- 18 July 1960	Ninth National Assembly	66
July 1960- May 1964	Tenth National Assembly	99
May 1964- May 1968	Eleventh National Assembly	99
May 1968- May 1972	Twelfth National Assembly	99
May 1972- May 1991	Thirteenth National Assembly	99
	(last National Assembly before the Taef agreements)	
October 1992- October 1996	Fourteenth National Assembly	128
October 1996- October 2000	Fifteenth National Assembly	128
October 2000- May 2005	Sixteenth National Assembly	128
May 2005- June 2009	Seventeenth National Assembly	128

Until 1939, all National Assemblies were mixed; meaning that they were formed of both elected and appointed members. But as of the fifth assembly all the members became entirely elected and consequently appointed members no longer existed. It was decided that the number of deputies would be a multiple of 11, which is the basic number that gives six seats to the Christians and five to the Muslims.

In May 1991, and in application of the Taef agreement, it was decided to appoint 40 members in addition to the former MPs who were still alive raising the total number to 108, equally distributed between Christians and Muslims. This appointment, however, did not have positive echoes among the Lebanese where the Media kept distinguishing between elected members and appointed ones. Later on, the number was increased to 128, divided equally between Christians and Muslims according to law no. 154/92. This number is still applied till the present day.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ADMINISTRATION - SECRETARIAT GENERAL

The Parliamentary Administration is called the "Secretariat General". As in many Arab National Assemblies, it is headed by the Secretary General and comprises six General Directorates divided into two main categories. The first category is directly related to the legislative process and is composed of the General Directorate of Sessions and Committees, the General Directorate of Studies and Information and the General Directorate of Foreign Affairs, whereas the second category is directly related to the institutional administration and comprises: the General Directorate of the National Assembly Presidency Affairs; the General Directorate of Administrative and Financial Affairs and the General Inspection Unit. Three Services are under the direct supervision of the Secretary General: Expenditure Control Service, the Joint Administrative Service and Information Technology Service. The National Assembly administration witnessed a major change throughout the last decade and particularly after 1992, as a result of the development of the legislative authority's role along with advancement in legislative and supervisory work mechanisms. Many new directorates were created in order to provide services related to the legislative process. The current status of the National Assembly Administration as defined by the new Administrative regulation of the Assembly (decision no. 934) issued on December 8, 2005 is as follows:

THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS

The General Directorate of Administrative and Financial Affairs is in charge of: All administrative and financial affairs of MPs and personnel of the National Assembly;

All the financial affairs concerning the Assembly such as the drafting of the Assembly budget and all accounts, and activities and decisions that have financial aspects;

All public services such as public maintenance and cleanliness of buildings.

The General Directorate of Administrative and Financial Affairs constitutes of:

- ▶ The Administrative Affairs Service
- ▶ The Fiscal Affairs Service
- ▶ The General Directorate Secretariat Service

THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT'S AFFAIRS

The General Directorate of the National Assembly President's Affairs is in charge of:

All activities related to the President's Chamber, the President's Office and the Advisory Office, which includes the Administrative Affairs, the Protocol Affairs, Information and Hospitality Affairs as well as anything that pertains to the organization and good functioning of the work.

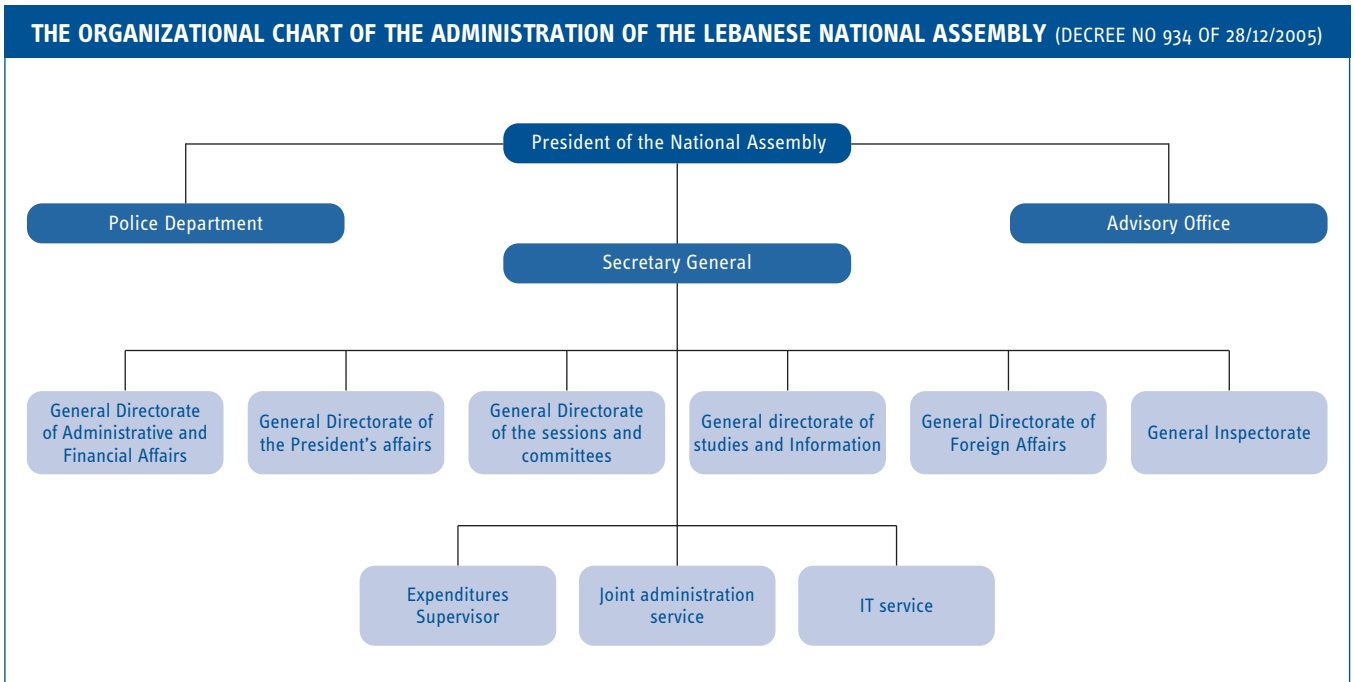
The General Directorate of the National Assembly Presidency constitutes of:

- ▶ The Public Relations and Protocol Service
- ▶ The Information and Communication Service
- ▶ The President's office Service
- ▶ The General Directorate Secretariat Department.

THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF SESSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The General Directorate of Sessions and Committees is in charge of: Everything that is related to the legislative process within the National Assembly, particularly the sessions of the General Assembly and those of parliamentary committees; Following up on all the stages of the draft laws and law proposals from the moment they are submitted to the Department of Joint Administrative affairs till the parliamentary committees and the General Assembly issue the final version. The General Directorate of Sessions and Committees works specifically on:

- ▶ Preparing the meetings of the Assembly and parliamentary committees;
- ▶ Insuring the requirements of the proper functioning of the standing committees, the joint committees and special committees established for specific purposes stipulated in the by-laws;
- ▶ Coordinating and organizing the work of parliamentary committee secretariats and providing them with all administrative, technical and legal means to perform their tasks;
- ▶ Reading over the texts in General Assembly sessions, making modifications and providing all necessary work means;



► Keeping record of all the plenary sessions and parliamentary committee notes and copying the tapes.

The General Directorate of Sessions and Committees is formed of:

- The Plenary sessions Service
- The Parliamentary Committees Service
- The Legal Department
- The Typing and Photocopying Department
- The General Directorate Secretariat Department

THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF STUDIES AND INFORMATION

The General Directorate of Studies and Information is in charge of:
 Preparing studies and researches in the fields that serve the requirements of the legislative process;

Supervising operations lead by the National Assembly;

Taking charge of the affairs of the National Assembly library in addition to the following:

- Providing studies, researches and statistics that are required for the proper functioning of the legislative process in the Assembly;
- Developing the capacities and documenting activities of the Assembly's library and setting a program for the Information Desk;
- Organizing local seminars at the National Assembly in collaboration with the concerned General Directorate;
- Publishing newsletters and bulletins as well as studies and parliamentary statistics, and supervising their drafting, editing, printing and distribution.

The Directorate of Studies and Information constitutes of:

- The Studies Service
- The Library Service
- The Publications Service
- The General Directorate Secretariat Service

THE GENERAL DIRECTORATE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The General Directorate of Foreign Affairs at the National Assembly is in charge of all the works related to Arab and Foreign relations of the Assembly and particularly:

- Managing the relations of the Assembly with Arab and foreign parties and particularly the Friendship Committees, the bilateral and multilateral cooperation programs and the Arab and International Parliamentary Union Affairs of which Lebanon is part, namely: the International Parliamentary Union, The Lebanese Expatriates Union, the Arab Parliamentary Union, the Islamic Parliamentary Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie and others;
- Supervising the organization of Arab and international conferences that are going to be held in Lebanon, including reception, translation, logistics and administrative affairs;
- Welcoming the Arab and Foreign delegations that visit Lebanon;
- Providing MPs and parliamentary delegations charged of traveling to international conferences with paperwork and travel procedures;

The General Directorate of Foreign Affairs constitutes of:

- The Parliamentary Relations Service
- The Parliamentary Unions Service
- The General Directorate Secretariat Service

THE GENERAL INSPECTORATE

The General Inspectorate is headed by a General Inspector of the first category and is in charge of:

- ▶ Inspecting the administrative units of the Assembly on a periodical basis;
- ▶ Executing the written and verbal assignments issued by the President or the Secretary General of the National Assembly;
- ▶ Working on the implementation of the laws, regulations and decisions made by the National Assembly staff;
- ▶ Offering opinions, proposals and studies to the Secretary General concerning the amendment of the regulations related to the organization of the National Assembly, the assessment of the staff functions and the methods of actions adopted;
- ▶ Investigating, on a personal basis, with level-one Civil Servants and inspecting the tasks accomplished by them upon a request by the President or the Secretary General of the National Assembly.

THE MEDIA DEPARTMENT

The National Assembly has paid for the last years a special attention to the parliamentary media, because of its important role in informing the public about the activities of the National Assembly, the President, the Plenary meetings, the National Assembly committees work and the different points of views and positions of the MPs and National Assembly affairs. In order to facilitate the work of the media, a special room, equipped with the necessary tools for communication, was established at the premises of the National Assembly. All written and audiovisual media were also given the opportunity of sending their correspondents and photographers to the National Assembly. The Media Service at the Assembly is in charge of presenting the National Assembly activities and organizing the President's relationship with the media. This service is also in charge of facilitating the work of the media at the Assembly and preparing communiqués pertaining to the activities of the Assembly. Moreover, the Media service prepares summaries on the most important events published by the local or international media.

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUREAU BOARD

The National Assembly Bureau Board is composed of the President, the Deputy President, the two secretaries and three delegates who are elected from among the MPs upon the opening of the October session every year and every time the National Assembly is elected. The National Assembly Bureau Board prepares and publishes the agenda of the General Assembly sessions, drafts and supervises the implementation of the National Assembly annual budget, approves staff appointments, modifies the cadres of the staff, studies petitions and complaints about the minutes of the meetings and directs the meetings and voting sessions.

The 2006 National Assembly Bureau Board is composed of:

- ▶ President: Nabih Berri
- ▶ Deputy President: MP Farid Makari
- ▶ Secretaries: MPs Ayman Shoucair and Jawad Boulos
- ▶ Delegates: MPs Michel Moussa, Serge Torsarkissian and Mohammed Kabbara



TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECTS WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

THE UNDP (THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME)

Since 1992, the Lebanese Parliament made huge efforts in order to modernize its administration, build the capacities of its employees and improve the National Assembly's performance. In order to help the National Assembly fulfill its objectives, the President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, signed with the Resident Representative of the UNDP, Yves de San, a cooperation project in 1999. The Project started to be implemented in 2000 and is still operating. The parliamentary development project aims at strengthening the potential of MPs in the practice of their legislative and supervisory work as well as to activate the National Assembly Administration that is the key tool in the parliamentary development, and without which little progress can be made.

The project implements a large array of activities that serve the aims of parliamentary development in the following:

- ▶ Supporting the role of the parliament as a guarantor of the dialogue and the national entente;
- ▶ Strengthening the capabilities of the National Assembly administration and particularly the legislative departments;
- ▶ Supporting the role of the National Assembly as a guarantor of the rule of law;
- ▶ Supporting the adoption of a Human Rights based approach in the parliamentary activities;
- ▶ Supporting the international parliamentary cooperations of the National Assembly;

The project is implementing all its activities in close cooperation with the national coordinator of the project - the Secretary General of Foreign Affairs at the National Assembly - who is coordinating, directing and assisting in the implementation of the project activities.

A COOPERATION AGREEMENT WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBANY/AMERICAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT USAID

Between the years 1994 and 2002, the National Assembly signed a series of memorandums of understanding with the University of Albany/ New York, supported by the US Agency for International Development, USAID. The memorandums aimed at providing technical assistance to the Assembly in order to contribute to the building of its legislative and institutional capacities. This aid included the

organization of parliamentary work visits to the US as well as the building of systems and IT programs and the training of employees and the modification of the administrative structure of the parliament. It has included as well the establishment of an Information system to study the budget and the financial and personal affairs of the National Assembly. In addition, this aid has assisted in building a website for the National Assembly and created a sound and voting system in the main room and a room for media follow-up and an internal TV network for the National Assembly. It has also helped in the creation of the forum for parliamentary dialogue and supported its activities.

THE COOPERATION PROJECT WITH THE WESTMINSTER FOUNDATION

The Lebanese National Assembly signed with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy a cooperation agreement in July 2006 that will allow the Lebanese Assembly to receive technical assistance from the institution. This foundation is a British organization, founded in 1992 with the aim of supporting the development of democracy at the international level. This agency, that has a representative for the Middle East and North African region, is an independent agency financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Commonwealth affairs and is mainly funded by grants. Of the foundation's activities in Lebanon is the organization of a work trip for six Lebanese MPs to the UK (2-8 July 2006) with the aim of strengthening the relationship between the British House of Commons and the Lebanese National Assembly and introducing to them the different aspects of the parliamentary work in Britain. During the visits, many meetings were held with MPs and administrators at the British House of Commons as well as with members of the House of Lords and with the General Audit Department. An additional visit to Northern Ireland was organized where the Lebanese MPs met with the representatives of various political parties in Northern Ireland.



ACTIVITIES ON ADMINISTRATIVE DEVELOPMENT

During the last decade, extensive efforts were made to improve the Assembly's administrative performance and to build its capacities and means of action. As a result, the administration at the National Assembly accomplished a paradigm shift in performance in the work fields, mechanisms, tools and competences of those who work in it. Many achievements were made in the following areas:

DEVELOPING THE USE OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY

- ▶ Building an IT network at the Assembly that links the units and the offices, which can be used and accessed directly from all contact points
- ▶ Providing the MPs offices and the majority of the employees of administrative category related to the legislative operating system, with computers and software
- ▶ Connecting all the MPs and employee offices to the internet
- ▶ Designing IT software that would tackle the legislative process, starting from the deposit of the bill of law or proposal or its suggestion at the National Assembly administration until its final approval in the Assembly.
- ▶ Automating the financial and administrative work
- ▶ Designing a comprehensive software for the management of all IT operations at the Assembly (database, internet, documentation, archives, etc)

DEVELOPING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY EMPLOYEE CAPACITIES

In this field, many activities were achieved in order to build the capacities of the employees and especially those who are directly related to the legislative process. Prominent among these activities is a series of technical sessions that was organized in cooperation with the French Senate in Paris and the UNDP at the National Assembly dealing with the legislative process, its requirements and the new law on public finances in France. It also dealt with matters of legal studies, documentation, library, and parliamentary friendship committees and the International parliamentary cooperation since 2002.

In 2006, the French Senate, in collaboration with the UNDP at the Lebanese Parliament, and with the support of the French Embassy in Beirut, organized training sessions for a group of IT parliamentary specialists. They aimed mainly at exchanging expertise between the civil servants of the Lebanese Assembly and those of the French Senate.

Rehabilitating the Basic Premises of the National Assembly

In this context, the following actions have been implemented:

- ▶ Furnishing the staff offices and equipping them with the latest computer systems;
- ▶ Furnishing the conference room (the national dialogue room) and equipping it with high -quality audio equipment.

ENHANCING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LIBRARY

The Parliamentary Library, to which a large area and modern equipment were allocated, was established at the National Assembly. It was supplied with ten thousand references in the legal, judiciary, and economic, social and administrative fields and has been provided with many legal references placed on accessible CDs.

Establishing a Center for Human Rights at the National Assembly Library

The President of the Parliamentary committee of Human rights, MP Michel Moussa inaugurated the Center for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law that was established in cooperation with the UNDP project at the National Assembly. The event was celebrated on Thursday 12/10/2006 at the National Assembly Library where MPs Ghassan Moukhaiber, Atef Majdalani, Jamal Al Jarrah, Nawar el Saheli and Elie Keyrouz were present. The Resident Representative of the UNDP in Lebanon, Dr. Mona Hammam along with many representatives of the international organizations in Lebanon and of Civil Society Organizations participated in this event. MP Moussa delivered a speech in which he said: "The aim of establishing this center is to provide a series of references, reports and books in the field of human rights that may be needed by the MPs, researchers and all those interested in issues related to human rights". The Center has been able so far to provide more than 300 books and reports in Arabic, French and English obtained from multiple Arab, Lebanese and international sources. Dr Hammam said that the UNDP is working in collaboration with the National Assembly in

many projects related to human rights and in particular the preparation of a National Action Plan for Human rights in Lebanon and publishing studies concerning the human rights situation in Lebanon and the role of the parliament in promoting human rights and adopting a policy on human rights in parliamentary work as well as organizing working visits to France to learn from the French human rights' approach. After the ceremony, MP Dr. Moussa and Dr. Hammam toured the library accompanied by the participants to see the contents of the center for human rights.

PARLIAMENTARY MEDIA

The following initiatives have been completed:

- ▶ Building and developing a website in Arabic and a parallel website in French in order to facilitate communication with the foreign parliaments. A first attempt at developing an English website has also been worked upon.
- ▶ Issuing the National Assembly magazine, "Parliamentary life", a quarterly magazine containing studies related to the legislation, reports, documents and legal texts.
- ▶ Issuing the Parliamentary Bulletin, a monthly bulletin on the activities of the President of the National Assembly, the Assembly Bureau Board and the parliamentary committees, in addition to news and information on the international and Arab world to inform about issues related to the legislative process
- ▶ Issuing the "International Development Affairs", a quarterly publication examining international development problems at global, regional and local levels (The fight against corruption, Aids, International Partnership for development, children's rights, UN agencies, etc)
- ▶ Issuing the annual report on the National Assembly activities, which is widely distributed, to all media and Civil Society Organizations.

PARTICIPATION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY STAFF IN TRAINING SESSIONS

The Parliamentary Committee Secretaries Ms Faten Omar and Mr. Hussein Awad participated in the twelfth training session organized by the Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, in Geneva, Switzerland between 27 and 30

November 2006; with the participation of parliamentary staffs from Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Albania and Palestine. The Lebanese delegation spoke about the legislative process and the activities of the parliamentary committees in the Lebanese National Assembly. The session included lectures and interventions on the current global issues. It also addressed disarmament issues and army dissolution issues. The session focused on parliamentary control tools for both the security and defense sectors.

General Inspector, Dr. Abdel Raouf Hijazi, along with the Director General for sessions and parliamentary committees, Dr. Riad Ghannam, have participated in the parliamentary seminar held in Rabat between November 13 and 17, 2006 with the participation of Senior staff in the French National Assembly and the parliaments of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. During the seminar many presentations were held on the new organization of the legislative sections in the French National Assembly and the situation in the parliaments of the Arab Maghreb region.

In the framework of the program of cooperation between both the Lebanese parliament and French National Assembly and in collaboration with the UNDP at the Lebanese Parliament, a delegation formed of civil servants at the Assembly went on a work visit to the French National Assembly between October 16 and 19, 2006. The visit focused on the administrative work within the parliamentary and standing committees, the procedures followed to introduce amendments to draft laws and proposals in the committee meetings or in the plenary sessions. The delegation participated in several meetings of the parliamentary committees (Finance, Economy and Education) where they had the opportunity to see the way amendment requests are made and adopted. The delegation also attended several meetings of the Assembly (questions asked to the government and the discussion of the general budget bill for 2007). The delegation also spent an entire day at the Senate where they met with the Director of international Affairs and the Director of Committees. The research focused on evaluating previous sessions and getting acquainted with the means of actions developed in the parliamentary committees. In addition, the delegation met the head of the French-Lebanese friendship groups in the National Assembly MP. Etienne Pinte, which stressed the close ties of friendship between both parliaments.

OUTCOME OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR 2006

The fundamental task of the parliamentary committees consists of reviewing the draft laws and proposals submitted to the parliament and monitoring the activities of the government through listening to the ministers and senior officials in the public sectors at the parliamentary committee meetings they are called for.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES' WORK MECHANISM

Each committee meets upon a request from its president. The Secretary notifies the members of the date of the meeting and the agenda that the president has prepared. Each committee has a specific deadline for what it is being worked on; they should complete their review and issue their reports of the drafts as well as all the issues submitted to them within one month. As for the urgent drafts, the committee concerned should finish its examination and issue its reports within no more than two weeks.

The committees' first session is only considered legal when more than half of the members are present. For the following sessions, the session is considered legal to examine the agenda of the first session, when the number of attendees is at least one third of the committee members. Attendance is compulsory, and a member is considered resigned arbitrarily once he/she abstains from three consecutive sessions without a legitimate cause.

At the committee session, the majority takes the votes. But in the event of a tie, the chairperson casts the decisive vote. The committees examine the subjects that are submitted to them one after the other, in chronological order, except for the urgent laws and what is considered as a priority by the concerned committee.

The committee sessions are open to all deputies: they can attend and participate in the discussions even if they are not members of the concerned committee. The only difference between the deputy member in the committee and the non-member is that the former ones can vote, while the latter cannot. The committee meetings, agenda and minutes and the proceedings of the debates and votes are confidential, unless decided otherwise by the committee.

On the other hand, the committee can invite the minister in charge of the subject being discussed to attend the session; the minister can delegate a representative unless the committee decides to invite him in person.

The committees of the National Assembly are entitled to request a competent minister to provide them with the documents and information they will need to examine.

After discussing the draft laws and proposals submitted to the committee, the voting takes place and everything that is related to the sessions is recorded "in detailed minutes" including the discussions, opinions, suggestions and decisions expressed, and it is signed by the president, the rapporteur and the secretary of the committee. The report of the committee must contain the different views and opinions expressed in the meeting. Reports prepared by the committee are sent to the parliamentary Bureau to be added to the plenary session's agenda.

It may be noted that the work of the committees, in all its aspects, is never considered binding. In the political sphere and for all public issues, the committee decisions are considered to be a "recommendation" either for the Government or for the Plenary.

THE 16 PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES:

The MPs are divided into sixteen permanent parliamentary committees, each composed of 9 to 17 members, including the president of the committee and the rapporteur. The parliamentary committees are elected by secret ballots at the beginning of the October session of each year. A deputy can be a member in two permanent committees in addition to the three following: human rights, women and child, and IT.

FINANCE AND BUDGET COMMITTEE

President: Samir Azar

Rapporteur: Antoine Andraos

Members: Anouar El-Khalil, Jawad Boulos, Ali Hassan Khalil, Nabil de Freige, Ghazi Youssef, Faysal El-Sayegh, Abdel-Majid Saleh, Ghassan Moukhaiber, Hussein El-Hajj Hassan, Mosbah El-Ahdab, Abbas Hachem, Yassine Jaber, Nicolas Ghosn, Moustapha Hachem, Mohammad Haydar.

ADMINISTRATION AND JUSTICE COMMITTEE

President: Robert Ghanem

Rapporteur: Nawwar Al-Sahili

Membres: Walid Eido, Nicolas Fattouche, Neemtallah Abi Nasr, Hadi Hobeich, Samir El-Jsir, Mohammad Raad, Ali Bazzi, Boutros Harb, Ghazi Zayter, Ali Hassan Khalil, Fouad El-Saad, Ibrahim Kanaan, Serge Torsarkissian, Elie Aoun, Ahmad Ftouh.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EMIGRANTS COMMITTEE

President: Abdel-Latif El-Zein

Rapporteur: Farid El-Khazen

Members: Pierre Serhal, Nabil Boustany, Mohammad Kabbani, Badr Wannous, Bahia Hariri, Samir Frangieh, Abdallah Hanna, Yassine Jaber, Hagop Pakradounian, Ali Ammar, Walid Khoury, Antoine Zahra, Nasser Nasrallah, Salim Salhab, Boutros Harb.

PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT, ENERGY AND WATER COMMITTEE

President: Mohammad Kabbani

Rapporteur: Badr Wannous

Members: Ala'eddine Terro, Salim Aoun, Mohammad Al-Hajjar, Hussein El-Hajj Hassan, Moustapha Hussein, Georges Kassarji, Mohammad Haydar, Chamel Mouzaya, Antoine Saad, Mohammad Kabbara, Henri Helou, Jamal Jarrah, Moustapha Hachem, Jamal El-Takch, Kassem Hachem.

NATIONAL EDUCATION, HIGHER EDUCATION AND CULTURE COMMITTEE

President: Bahia Hariri

Rapporteur: Riyad Rahhal

Members: Wael Abou Faour, Farid El-Khazen, Kamel Al-Rifai, Ali Osseirane, Marwan Fares, Hassan Fadlallah, Mahmoud Al-Mrad, Ali Khreiss, Solange Toutounji, Mohammad Al-Hajjar.

PUBLIC HEALTH, LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

President: Atef Majdalani

Rapporteur: Assem Araji

Members: Antoine Khoury, Azzam Dandachi, Ali El-Mokdad, Walid Khoury, Kassem Abdel-Aziz, Riyad Rahhal, Youssef Khalil, Ammar Houry, Michel Moussa, Ismail Soukkarieh.

IMMIGRANT AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

President: Hagop Kassarjian

Rapporteur : Moustapha Allouch

Members: Abdallah Farhat, Yeghya Gerjian, Nicolas Ghosn, Antoine Zahra, Antoine Ghanem, Nabil Boustany, Abdel-Majid Saleh, Mohammad Raad, Hagop Pakradounian, Ala'eddine Terro

AGRICULTURE AND TOURISM COMMITTEE

President: Ayyoub Hmayed

Rapporteur: Neemtallah Abi-Nasr

Members: Elias Atallah, Hassan Yaacoub, Wael Abou Faour, Hachem Alameddine, Gilberte Zouein, Hassan Hobbalah, Ali Khreis, Ayman Choucair, Ahmad Ftouh, Assem Araji.

NATIONAL ECONOMY, TRADE, INDUSTRY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

President: Nabil de Freige

Rapporteur: Ali Bazzi

Members: Amine Cherri, Hagop Kassarjian, Farid Habib, Camille El-Maalouf, Ghazi Youssef, Yeghya Gerjian, Jawad Boulos, Bassem El-Chab, Abdallah Farhat, Moustapha Hussein.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

President: Hussein Fadlallah

Rapporteur: Ghinwa Jalloul

Members: Kamel El-Rifai, Antoine Andraos, Georges Kassarji, Hachem Alameddine, Nader Succar, Faysal El-Sayegh, Kassem Abdel-Aziz, Samir Franjeh, Atef Majdalani, Nabil Nicolas.

NATIONAL DEFENSE, INTERIOR AND MUNICIPALITIES COMMITTEE

President: Walid Eido

Rapporteur: Anwar El-Khalil

Members: Abdallah Hanna, Mosbah El-Ahdab, Antoine Saad, Ali Ammar, Ousama Saad, Kassem Hachem, Edgard Maalouf, Mohammad Kabbara, Ali Osseirane, Antoine Ghanem, Nasser

Nassrallah, Chamel Mouzaya, Bassem El-Chab, Hassan Hobbalah, Ghazi Zaayter.

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

President: Michel Moussa

Rapporteur: Ghassan Moukhaiber

Members: Marwan Fares, Solange Toutounji, Elias Atallah, Ismail Soukkarieh, Hassan Hobbalah, Elie Keyrouz, Ibrahim Kanaan, Ala'eddine Terro, Hassan Yaacoub, Pierre Daccache.

WOMAN AND CHILD COMMITTEE

President: Gilberte Zouein

Rapporteur: Solange Toutounji

Members: Bahia Hariri, Anwar El-Khalil, Marwan Fares, Ali Khreiss, Jamal Jarrah, Ghinwa Jalloul, Faysal El-Sayegh, Pierre Serhal, Nabil Nicolas, Ali Osseirane.

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

President: Akram Chehayeb

Rapporteur: Antoine Khoury

Members: Nicolas Fattouche, Salim Aoun, Ali El-Mokdad, Hagop Pakradounian, Michel Moussa, Farid Habib, Henri Helou, Oussama Saad, Nabil Nicolas, Pierre Daccache.

YOUTH AND SPORTS COMMITTEE

President: Ibrahim Kanaan

Rapporteur: Amine Cherri

Members: Elie Keyrouz, Mahmoud Al-Mourad, Serge Torsarkissian, Abbas Hachem, Moustapha Allouche, Hadi Hobeich, Ammar Houry, Nawwar El-Sahili, Jamal El-Takch, Wael Abou Faour.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

President: Ghinwa Jalloul

Rapporteur: Georges Kassarji

Members: Mohammad El-Hajjar, Moustapha Hachem, Nawwar El-Sahili, Riyad Rahhal, Abbas Hachem, Badr Wannous, Camille Maalouf.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES IN 2006

When compared to 2005, the activities of the parliamentary committee of 2006 have witnessed a remarkable progress. The number of meetings increased for the following committees: Administration and Justice, Finance and Budget, Public Works, Public Health and Environment, Information Technology, Human Rights and Education and Higher Education. In return, the sessions held by The Information and Communication and Immigrant affairs committees have decreased while many other committees have kept the same pace. The number of sessions held by the parliamentary committees in 2006 was 266 meetings and about 17 sub-committee meetings for the Public Works and Health Committees.

The 2006 sessions were as follows:

- ▶ Administration and Justice Committee: 57 sessions
- ▶ Finance and Budget committee: 22 sessions
- ▶ Public Works and Transport committee: 45 sessions + 14 sub-committees
- ▶ Agriculture committee: 5 sessions
- ▶ Education and Higher Education: 11 sessions.
- ▶ Foreign Affairs and Emigrants Committees: 19 sessions
- ▶ Public health Committee: 17 sessions + 3 sub-committees.
- ▶ National Defense Committee: 14 sessions
- ▶ National Economy Committee: 12 sessions
- ▶ Information Committee: 6 sessions
- ▶ Environment Committee: 5 sessions
- ▶ Human Rights Committee: 12 sessions
- ▶ Woman and Child Committee: 5 sessions
- ▶ Immigrants committee: 3 sessions
- ▶ Youth and Sport Committee: 7 sessions
- ▶ Information Technology Committee: 26 sessions

When compared to the month of March, which has had the lowest rate of 6 sessions, the month of May has recorded a high rate of committee sessions, where 39 sessions were held. The average monthly sessions reached 22 and the weekly average of sessions reached around 5 knowing that the sessions stopped on Fridays and Saturdays and during the General Assembly meetings as well as during the holidays and Sundays.



Concerning the General Assembly meetings, the National Assembly has held 9 public sessions that lasted over 13 days, some of which had both morning and afternoon sessions, at an average of one session per month.

The General Assembly meetings were held as follows:

1. 30/1/2006 (morning and evening): discussing the budget for 2005
2. 30/1/2006 (evening)- legislation
3. 2/2/2006 (morning) questions and answers
4. 23/3/2006 (morning) questions and answers
5. 30/3/2006 (morning) questions and answers
6. 3 and 4/5/2006 (morning) legislation
7. 23 and 30/5/2006 (morning) questions and Answers
8. 17/10/2006 (morning) electing the National Assembly Bureau Board and the members of parliamentary committees.
9. 31/10/2006 and 1/11/2006 (morning)- legislation



These sessions were divided according to their agendas and worked upon as follows:

- ▶ one session dedicated to the discussion of the budget of 2005 and closing the balance accounts of 2003, during which two law projects were adopted:
- ▶ 3 sessions were dedicated to legislation during which 68 laws were adopted and 17 project laws rejected
- ▶ One session for the election of the committee members and the National Assembly Bureau Board
- ▶ 4 sessions for questions and answers

In addition, the parliament adopted three recommendations:

- ▶ A recommendation that condemns the blasphemy against the Prophet and Virgin Mary.
- ▶ A recommendation for the rejection of the subpoena against MP Walid Jumblatt, issued by the Syrian judicial authorities.
- ▶ Greetings sent to the parliament of the State of Kuwait to congratulate Kuwaitis on the democratic transfer of power.

PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES' SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS IN 2006

On Monday November 20 2006 and in the Occasion of the International Children's Day, the Woman and Child committee held in collaboration with the UNDP at the National Assembly and with the Higher Council for Childhood, a consultative meeting on "the impact of the Israeli aggression on the children in Lebanon". The meeting was held at the National Assembly and was attended by the committee members along with the representative of the Minister of Social Affairs and the representatives of public Administrations, International Organizations and concerned Lebanese and International Civil Society Organizations.

The woman and Child committee held a consultative meeting, in collaboration with the UNDP on 13/10/2006 at 10.30 AM. The meeting dealt with the impacts of the Israeli aggression on the conditions of women in Lebanon. The aim of the meeting was to reach some orientations and guidelines that can help with the aftermath of the aggression and limiting the negative results through the intervention of the state or the municipal and civil institutions. The meeting was headed by committee president Gilberte Zouein and in the presence of MPs: Ali Oseiran, Jamal El Jarrah and the Rapporteur of the Human Rights committee Ghassan Moukhaiber. Among the participants were: Ms. Asma Cordahi who represented the UNFPA and Dr. Fadia Kiwan who represented the Saint Joseph University Institute of Political Studies, heading a delegation of the university students as observers. Mr. Elie Khoury, Director of the UNDP project at the National Assembly, spoke at the beginning welcoming all participants and explaining the aims of the meeting. Then the committee president MP Gilberte Zouein took the floor to welcome all guests and highlight some

aspects of the women sufferings as a result of the aggression. Dr. Kamal Hamdan and Dr. Hoda Rizk, from the Institute of Research and Consultation, presented their first findings of the study undergone by the Institute for this purpose commissioned by the UNDP. More than fifty CSOs concerned with women affairs were also present. It was decided to hold a similar meeting and invite all these organizations again at the National Assembly in order to discuss the final text of the study prepared by the Institute for Research and Consultancy.

The parliamentary dialogue forum organized on 25/04/2006, in collaboration with the General Directorate of Studies and Information at the National Assembly and in the context of the cooperation with the YMCA, Annahar daily, the International Institution for Management and Training, and with the support of the US Middle East partnership, a workshop in the library hall of the Lebanese Parliament on "Media and National Dialogue in Lebanon". It is the third among a series of workshops dealing with themes like: Good governance, corruption, rule of law, monopoly and globalization. MPs Abdellatif el Zein, Hadi Hbeish, Hassan Yaacoub, Ali Bazzi and forty participants among them secretaries of parliamentary committees, civil society activists, and representatives of international organs, media, experts and researchers were present.

Under the sponsorship of His Excellency the President of the National Assembly Mr. Nabih Berri and in his presence, a parliamentary seminar was held in Beirut, between February 6 and 7, 2006 discussing "the parliament's role in the Success of the National Dialogue". The seminar was at the initiative of the National Assembly in cooper-

ation with the UNDP project at the National Assembly. The President inaugurated the works of the seminar in the presence of more than fifty MPs, a big number of ambassadors and diplomats, and the Resident Representative of the UNDP in Lebanon, Dr. Mona Hammam. Many delegates from the General Directorates, universities and civil society organizations were present. The seminar started with the speech of the UNDP project manager at the parliament, Mr. Elie Khoury, who welcomed all the guests and noted that the seminar was held in the context of launching a National dialogue which comes at a time where Lebanon is facing "an acute political crisis of multiple aspects and dimensions, and in order to face it, the political forces should accept the necessity of agreeing and accepting the dialogue initiatives based on the provisions of the National Entente Document". Khoury added: "the Lebanese population expects all political forces to answer to this initiative, because experience has taught them that the more marginalized or violated the National Assembly role is, the more the Lebanese will resort to the street and weapons, i.e. to the destruction of their country and to its ultimate suicide".

Then, the two international experts, Jean Jacques Viseur, MP at the Belgian National Assembly, and former Minister of Finance, Lord John Alderdice, head of Liberal International and former speaker of the Northern Ireland National Assembly delivered an intervention each about the experiences of Belgium and Northern Ireland in national dialogue and conflict resolution. The following day, the experts held meetings with the parliamentary committees.

DOCUMENTING THE ISRAELI WAR CRIMES

In the aftermath of the Israeli aggression that has caused huge human losses, His Excellency Mr. Nabih Berri formed at the National Assembly a work cell, under the supervision of MP Ghassan Moukhaiber, the Rapporteur of the Human Rights committee, entitled: "The Network Against the Israeli War Crimes". The aim was to collect all the documents pertaining to the 2006 war and especially those related to the Human International law, in order to be used later on for any lawsuit against Israel. The network is formed of the members of the Lebanese Civil Society Organizations, mainly the Institute of Human Rights at the Beirut Bar Association, the Lebanese Association of Human Rights and the Arab Network for Development. The UNDP played an important role in supporting and accompanying the network in all its activities. Among the most important activities of the network was the thematic documentation and archiving of information at the Human Rights Center of the Parliamentary library (Lebanese and Non-Lebanese reports/ news on war crimes/ studies and articles). The work also encompassed the preparation of forms concerning the aggressive Israeli acts resulting in the fall of civil victims injured and martyrs as well as the destruction of many houses. These pieces of information are used by volunteers (especially lawyers) that are divided on a geographical basis to join many independent committees. The network held many meetings during the war and after it and prepared a detailed report with documents and photos concerning the Israeli aggression against Lebanon.

LAWS ADOPTED BY THE ASSEMBLY IN 2006

1. Law no. 717

Issued on 3/2/2006 (O.J. 6 dated 7/2/2006) allowing tax imports as previously implemented and the disbursement of expenses starting on the first of February 2006 till the issuance of the Budget Law in 2006 on the basis of the twelfth provisions rule.

2. Law no. 716

Issued on 3/2/2006 (O.J. 6 dated 7/2/2006) closing the accounts of the budget of 2003.

3. Law no. 715

(O.J. 8 dated 11/2/2006) the Public Budget and Annex Budgets for 2005.

4. Law no. 751

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) the separation of the Bqarsouna -Katine village- Menieh Casa- Donnieh, Governorate of the North, to become two separate villages, i.e. the village of Bqarsouna and the village of Katine.

5. Law no. 750

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) the prolongation of the law on "leasing" till 31/12/2006.

6. Law no. 749

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) the recognition and equivalency of foreign high school certificates held by Lebanese.

7. Law no. 748

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) the definition of special bases for the fresh-man classes and its equivalence.

8. Law no. 747

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) the correction of the name of the "Klaaya" village, in West Bekaa Casa, Bekaa Governorate, to become "Klaya" village.

9. Law no. 746

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) preventing the government from legislating in the field of customs.

10. Law no. 745

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) the modification of paragraph (1) of article 5 of law 234 dated 10/6/2006 on the organization of financial intermediation profession.

11. Law no. 744

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) the modification of paragraph (1) of article 94 of legislative decree no. 144 dated 12/6/1959 and its modifications (tax on revenues).

12. Law no. 742

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) the modification of paragraph (1) of article 42 of legislative decree no. 102 dated 16/9/1983 (National Defense) and its modifications.

13. Law no. 739

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an agreement between the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Belarus on anti- crime cooperation

14. Law no. 737

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an agreement between the Republic of Lebanon and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on avoiding dual taxation and prevent tax evasion on income

15. Law no. 736

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to join the international convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism

16. Law no. 735

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an agreement on financial cooperation between the Republic of Lebanon and the German Federal Government (project of Ghadir water) (sixteen million and two hundred twenty five thousand eight hundred thirty seven and sixty two/hundred euros- 1622583762)

17. Law no. 734

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an agreement between the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Turkey avoiding dual taxation and tax evasion on income

18. Law no. 733

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an agreement between the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Belarus on International Land Transportation of Passengers and Commodities by roads

19. Law no. 730

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) Allowing the government to sign an agreement on agriculture with Iceland

20. Law no. 729

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an agreement on agriculture with Switzerland

21. Law no. 728

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) Allowing the government to join the Rotterdam Convention on the Application of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) on Certain endangered Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade

22. Law no. 727

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an educational and cultural cooperation agreement between the governments of Lebanon and

United Mexican States, signed in Beirut on the 21st /6/2000

23. Law no. 726

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an agreement between the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Korea on economic and commercial cooperation

24. Law no. 725

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an Apex Global Loan multi-sector between the Republic of Lebanon and the European Investment Bank to finance several sectors within the private sector. (Sixty million)

25. Law no. 724

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign a cooperation agreement in the field of shipping and maritime affairs between the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Yemen.

26. Law no. 723

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) Allowing the government to sign a cooperation agreement on land transportation for people and goods between the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Yemen

27. Law no. 722

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to ratify the convention on the protection of the cultural heritage.

28. Law no. 721

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign a funding contract between the Republic of Lebanon and the European Investment Bank (wastewater project in southern Lebanon) (one hundred eleven million seven hundred and fifty thousand euro, 111750000)

29. Law no. 720

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006)

allowing the government to ratify the convention for the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage.

30. Law no. 719

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to sign an agreement between the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Romania on fighting against organized crime, terrorism, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and other serious crimes.

31. Law no. 718

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25 dated 22/5/2006) allowing the government to join the Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition illegally, that completes the UN convention against transnational Organized Crime

32. Law no. 743

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25/5/2006) establishing the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities medal, its description and the conditions for giving it.

33. Law n. 752

Issued on 19/5/2006 (O.J 25/5/2006) Application of the provisions of law no. 84/05 dated 30/7/1984 on some Internal Security Forces.

34. Law n. 741

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25/5/2006) allowing the government to sign a funding contract between the Republic of Lebanon and the European Investment Bank (project of Lebanese highways) (one hundred twenty two million euros).

35. Law n. 740

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J 25/5/2006) allowing the government to sign a convention on the liberalization of the air transport among Arab countries.

36. Law n. 738

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25/5/2006) allowing the government to join The Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

37. Law n. 732

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25/5/2006) allowing the government to sign the convention on free trade between the Republic of Lebanon and the EFTA countries.

38. Law n. 741

Issued on 15/5/2006 (O.J. 25/5/2006) Allowing the government to sign an agricultural convention between the Republic of Lebanon and Norway.

39. Law n. 753

Issued on 22/6/2006 (O.J. 29 8/6/2006) Amendment of some provisions of the social security Act and the exemption of additional delay and irregularities and the possibility of paying in installments the debts of the states resulting from the contributions of the National Social Security Fund.

40. Law issued on 9/6/2006

(O.J. 30 dated 12/6/2006) organizing the affairs of the Druze community.

41. Law issued on 9/6/2006

(O.J. 30 dated 12/6/2006) the modification of some provisions of law no. 93-250 dated 14/3/1993 and its modifications (the establishment of the Constitutional Council)

42. Organizing the affairs of the Druze sect published in the Official Gazette no. 30 dated 12/6/2006

43. (O.J. 35 dated 13/7/2006) Code of Criminal Procedures for the Evangelical community in Syria and Lebanon.

44. (O.J. 35 dated 13/7/2006) Personal Status Code for the Evangelical community in Lebanon and Syria

45. Law no. 777

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) the modification of law no. 320 dated 20/4/2001 (giving school directors administrative compensations)

46. Law no. 776

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) the modification of article 12 of law 367 dated 1/8/1994 (law on practicing pharmacy) modified by law no. 635 dated 23/4/1997

47. Law no. 775

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) on the modification of article seven of law 462 dated 2/9/2002 (organizing the electricity sector)

48. Law no. 774

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) the facilitation for housing loans for people with disabilities.

49. Law no. 773

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) Additional appropriation in the budget of the Ministry of Education and Higher education of 2006 (10 billion LBP)

50. Law no. 772

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) the modification of legislative decree no. 54 dated 24/6/1983 (the system of Holding companies)

51. Law no. 771

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) on the modification of law no. 360 dated 16/8/2001 (encouraging investments in Lebanon)

52. Law no. 770

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) Additional Appropriation in the budget of the Ministry of Finance of 2006 (10.000.000.000 LBP)

53. Law no. 769

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) the adding of the job of private secretary for the Mufti of the Lebanese Republic and a private secretary for the presidency of the Higher Shiite Council to the cadres of both the Sunni Ifta and Higher Shiite Council and the modification of article 460 on the law of organizing the Sunni legal court and Jaafari legal court dated 16/07/1962

54. Law no. 767

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) the modification of law no. 539 dated 24/7/1996 related to the Establishment of the Housing Institute

55. Law no. 766

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) the establishment, regulation and control of blood banks.

56. Law no. 754

Dated (10/11/2006) (O.J. 54 dated 16/11/2006) Allowing the government to sign a convention for revitalizing investments and protecting mutual investments, between the Lebanese Government and the Republic of Korea.

57. Law no. 760

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) enabling the government to sign a financial agreement for wastewater project in Greater Beirut between the Republic of Lebanon and the European Investment Bank 155 000000 (one hundred fifty five million euros)

58. Law no. 759

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to sign the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty

59. Law no. 758

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to join the Beijing modifications concerning the

Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer

60. Law no. 757

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to sign the UN Convention on Jurisdictional immunity of States and their Property

61. Law no. 756

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to sign the Agreement on the Mechanism for Collective bargaining of Arab Blocs with Regional and Sub-regional Groupings

62. Law no. 755

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to join the United Nations Convention on Contracts for International Sale of commodities.

63. Law no. 764

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to sign the International Agreement on Olive Oil and Table Olives for 2005

64. Law no. 763

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to sign an agreement between the Republic of Lebanon and the Republic of Guinea on the activation and protection of reciprocal investments

65. Law no. 762

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to sign a convention on avoiding dual taxation on revenue evasion with respect to taxes on income and capital between the government of the Republic of Lebanon and the Government of the State of Qatar.

66. Law no. 761

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 55 dated 23/11/2006) authorizing the government to sign a convention between the Republic of Lebanon and the Sultanate of Oman for the establishment of air services between and beyond their respective territories.

67. Law no. 765

Dated (11/11/2006) (O.J. 57 dated 30/11/2006) authorizing the government to join the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction.

68. Law no. 778

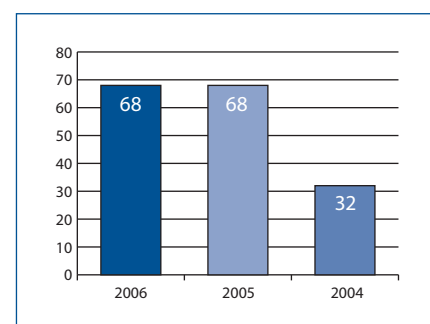
Dated (28/11/2006) (O.J. 58 dated 07/12/2006) concerning plant quarantine and phytosanitary measures.

LAW DISTRIBUTION FOR 2006

As shown by Table 1, The National Assembly has adopted in 2006 a total of “68” draft laws and law projects. The distribution of laws in 2006 equals that of 2005, followed by the year 2004.

TABLE 1 DRAFT LAWS AND LAW PROJECTS ADOPTED IN THE PERIOD OF 2004-2006

Year	Number of laws
2006	68
2005	68
2004	32
Total	168



DISTRIBUTION OF LAWS BY LEGISLATION THEME

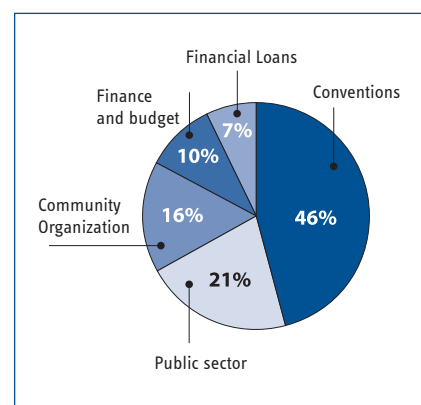
The draft laws and law projects adopted in 2006 are distributed along six main axes. The international and bilateral conventions represented the highest percentage (46%), followed by the public sector (19%), then the community organization laws, (16%). Table no.3 shows the distribution of laws by legislative themes.

TABLE 2 LAW DISTRIBUTION BY LEGISLATION THEMES

Year	Conventions	Public sector	Community Organization	Finance and Budget	Financial loans	Total
2006	31	14	11	7	5	68

TABLE 3 LAW DISTRIBUTION BY LEGISLATION THEMES
(NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES)

Type	Number	Percentage
Conventions	31	46%
Public sector	14	21%
Community Organization	11	16%
Finance and budget	7	10%
Financial Loans	5	7%
Total	68	100%

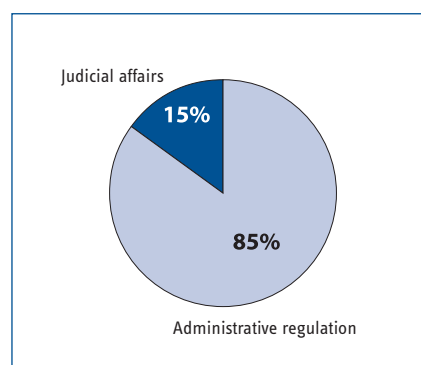


PUBLIC SECTOR AFFAIRS

The draft and law projects for 2006 dealing with public administrations totaled 14 laws. Some dealt with administrative regulation (85%) whereas others with judicial affairs (15%). The administrative regulation laws include the establishment of public institutions and administrative services within the public directorates as well as the equivalence of foreign diplomas and the organization of some professions (financial intermediation); The judicial affairs laws include the regulations of the judicial affairs and judicial courts and the establishment of the constitutional council.

TABLEAU 4 DISTRIBUTION OF THE SUB-DIVISIONS OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR LAWS

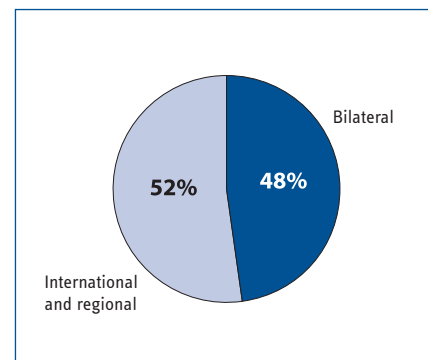
Laws distribution	Number	Percentage
Administrative regulation	12	85%
Judicial affairs	2	15%
Total	14	100%



INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL CONVENTIONS AND AGREEMENTS

TABLE 5 DISTRIBUTION OF LAWS BY TYPE

Type	Number	Percentage
International and regional	16	52%
Bilateral	15	48%
Total	31	100%



BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

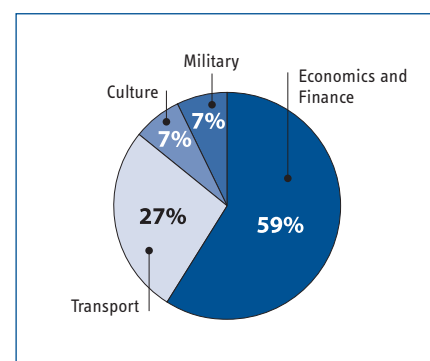
Bilateral Agreements are those signed between Lebanon and another state. The total number of those conventions is 15 signed with 12 states. The countries with whom Lebanon has signed only one convention are: Qatar, Guinea, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Turkey, Pakistan, Oman and Mexico.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BY THEME

The bilateral agreements are distributed into four themes, which are: economics and finance (59%), transportation (27%), culture (7%) and military affairs (7%). The economic field includes promoting and protecting investments, avoiding tax duality and preventing tax evasion and economic, tourist, commercial and customs cooperation. The transportation area covers the land, air and sea while the cultural field covers cooperation in cultural, scientific, secondary and higher education and vocational and technical education matters. As for the social affairs field, it includes a series of specific conventions on health, social or general aspects for the development of cooperation and friendship ties between Lebanon and the concerned countries or the establishment of joint committees.

TABLE 6 DISTRIBUTION OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS BY THEME

Subject	Number	Percentage
Economics and Finance	9	59%
Transport	4	27%
Culture	1	7%
Military	1	7%
Total	15	100%

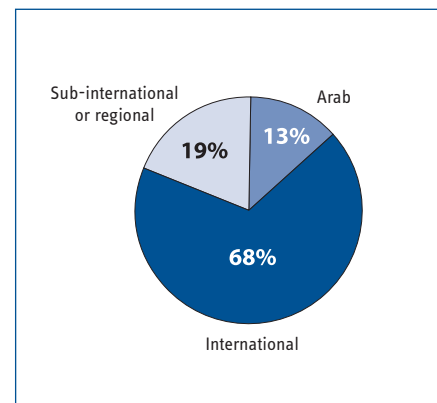


THE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

These Conventions are the ones signed with international organizations, and Arab, semi-international and regional organizations. The total number of these conventions is 16: 68% with international organizations, 19% with sub-international and regional and 13% with Arab organizations. With regards to international conventions, they cover matters such as joining the convention against transnational organized crime. The Arab conventions, on the other hand, deal with the establishment of a free trade zone with the GCC countries.

TABLE 7 DISTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Convention type	Number	Percentage
International	11	68%
Sub- international or regional	3	19%
Arab	2	13%
Total	16	100%



FINANCIAL LOANS

During this period of time, 5 loan agreements were signed with banks and international funds. It is noteworthy that the funds and Arab country loans were absent in 2006 in contrast to the previous year. The majority of the loans were with the European Investment Bank.

TABLE 8 DISTRIBUTION OF LOANS AMONG INTERNATIONAL AND ARAB

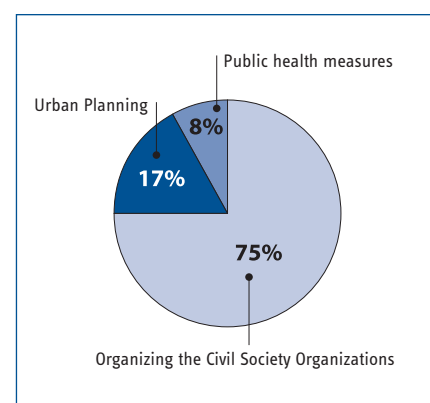
Name of the Lending Bank or country	Number of loans	Value
European Investment Bank	4	448,750,000 Euros
German Federal Bank	1	16,225,838 Euros
Total	5	464,975,838 Euros

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

In this category, the laws included are the ones dealing with the regulatory matters of non-governmental and civil society educational and social matters as well as those pertaining to the urban planning and land management. This category encompasses 11 draft laws and law projects: 82% having to do with the organization of civil society institutions and 18% concerned with land management and urban planning. The laws related to the organization of civil society institutions included the establishment and organization of the Chambers of Commerce and Trade and the Physicians' Unions. The category of land management and urban planning encompassed the joining of some villages to cazas and the modification of the names of others as well as the establishment of natural reserves and real estate improvement.

TABLE 9 DISTRIBUTION OF THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION LAWS BY SUB-CATEGORIES

Subcategory	Number	Percentage
Organizing the Civil Society Organizations	9	75%
Urban Planning	2	17%
Public health measures	1	8%
Total	12	100%

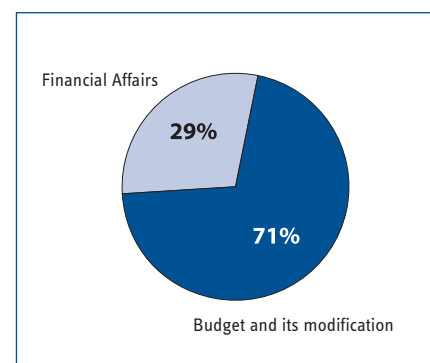


FINANCE AND BUDGET

The number of draft laws and law projects in this category is 7, two of which (29%) deal with public finance matters such as the privatization of credits of specific objectives and the rectification and calculation of salaries and the modification of fees; whereas the other five (71%) deal with adopting and modifying the budgets.

TABLE 10 DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCE AND BUDGET LAWS BY SUB-CATEGORIES

Subcategory	Number	Percentage
Budget and its modification	5	71%
Financial Affairs	2	29%
Total	7	100%



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OVERSIGHT ACTIVITIES FOR 2006

MECHANISMS FOR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONTROL OVER THE GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES

The Lebanese National Assembly ought to exercise its oversight on the government policies in all fields through one of the three following procedures:

The right not to give confidence to the government on any reason that one or more MPs see as a violation of the ministerial statement that had been previously gained the vote of confidence on or any breach of the execution of the content of this statement or any illegitimate ministerial position. Every MP can practice this right in the ordinary as well as the extraordinary sessions.

Questions: this is a written procedure presented by one or more MPs to inquire about an issue or to draw the attention of the government to an issue that requires some specific measurements.

Interrogations: which is a written procedure like the questions. However, if the MP, author of the interrogation, is not satisfied with the answer given by the government, he can request the withdrawal of confidence.

Investigation Committees: the National Assembly can decide to undertake any parliamentary investigation on a specific subject and grant the investigation committees the “power of judiciary investigative bodies”. Nevertheless, the National Assembly constitutes such committees only when crucial and important issues exist.

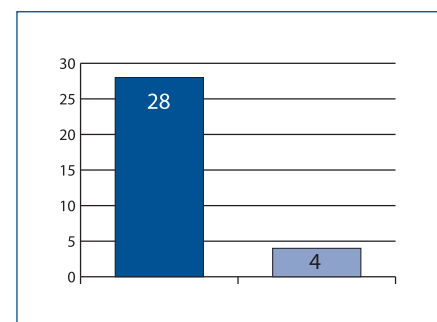
Charges against Presidents and Ministers: the National Assembly has the only authority and the right to advance charges against presidents and ministers in front of the Supreme Court that is composed of 15 members including seven MPs who are elected by the National Assembly at the beginning of each mandate.

QUESTIONS AND INTERROGATIONS IN 2006

The MPs submitted this year a total of 32 questions and interrogations. The following charts show their distribution by type (individual- collective), the themes and the number of MPs who have submitted them.

1. DISTRIBUTION OF MP QUESTIONS (INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE)

Type	Number
Individual questions	28
Collective questions	4
Total	32

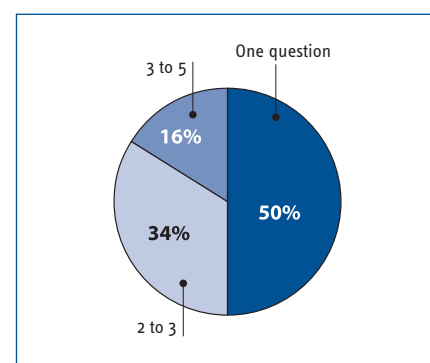


The individual questions are those that are asked by one MP; the collective questions are those that are asked by more than one MP.

2. DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONS AND INTERROGATIONS BY THE NUMBER OF MPS WHO SUBMITTED THEM

This year, 23 MPs have submitted individual questions and interrogations, representing 18% of the National Assembly members. The questions and interrogations were not equally divided among the MPs. 14 MPs submitted 42% and five submitted 58% of them. The following table shows the distribution of the number of MPs by number of questions and interrogations.

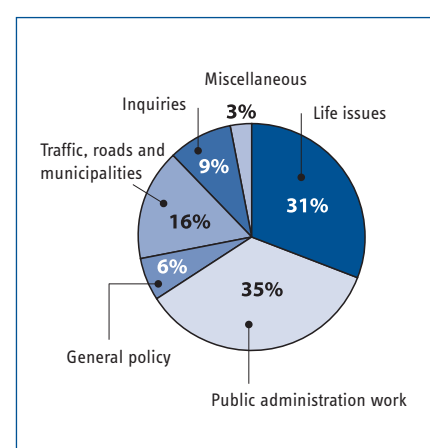
Number of MPs	Number of questions submitted by one MP	Total number of questions	Percentage
16	One question	16	50%
6	2 to 3	11	34%
1	3 to 5	5	16%
23	-	32	100%



3. SUBJECTS OF QUESTIONS AND INTERROGATIONS

The questions and interrogations dealt with the following:

Subject	Nbr. de questions	Details
Public administration work	11	public administrations, finance and budget
Life issues	10	electricity, water, telephone, education, health, medicines and environment
Traffic, roads and municipalities	5	
General policy	2	Public freedom, information
Inquiries	3	
Miscellaneous	1	
Total	32	



The 32 questions and interrogations submitted by the 23 MPs dealt with issues related to the various regions and in particular the state of the public administrations and the state of the roads, electricity and water. The questions on the public administration activities covered 35%, the life issues 31% as for questions that turned into interrogations, they are two out of 32, i.e. 7% of the total number.

QUESTIONS AND INTERROGATIONS SUBMITTED IN 2006

TABLE DETAILING THE QUESTIONS AND INTERROGATIONS SUBMITTED WITH THEIR RESPECTIVE SUBJECTS		
Date	Author	Subject
16/1/2006	Nicolas Fattouche	On the legal irregularities and interferences in the affairs of the judges and judicial sentences
17/1/2006	Elias Skaff, Hassan Yaacoub, Salim Aoun, Kamil Maalouf, Asem Araji and George Kassarji	On the legal measures taken and to be taken to stop the execution of unrealistic and illegal compensations which collectively exceeded 21 million US dollars given without any justification to the brothers of Nicolas Fattouche and their partners.
18/1/2006	Ismail Succarieh	On the results of the classification of hospitals
27/2/2006	Mustapha Hashem	On the Delay in the execution of the Deir Ammar- Abda highway
9/3/2006	Ismail Succarieh	On the Health card for handicapped
9/3/2006	Ismail Succarieh	On the Insurance of financial credits to Dr. Noel Barrett and the classification of hospitals in Lebanon
23/3/2006	Yasseen Jaber	On the Reduction of mobile call costs
23/3/2006	Yasseen Jaber	On the government's plan to carry out local maintenance work necessary for the different infrastructures particularly the main roads
28/3/2006	Akram Shhayyeb	The role of the Syrian-Lebanese Higher Council and it's President
11/4/2006	Jawad Boulos	The suffering of the citizens at the Mechanical service center in the North
13/4/2006	Kamil Maalouf	The decree that licenses the National Social Security Fund to offer check-ups and dental health services
13/4/2006	Ghassan Moukhaiber	On the issue of the forcibly disappeared persons and the purification of the war memory
25/4/2006	Baheej Tabbara	On unpleasant smells and odors in Beirut and it's neighborhoods coming from a boat that docted at the port of Beirut carrying cows imported to Lebanon
25/4/2006	Ayyoub Homayyed	The crime of abducting the Imam Moussa el Sadr and his two companions, Sheikh Mohammed Yaacoub and journalist Abbas Badr eddine in Lybia
28/4/2006	Ismail Succarieh, Qasem Abdel Aziz and Asem Araji	Hospitalization problems in Lebanon
16/5/2006	Ghassan Moukhaiber	The delay of the government in submitting some reports to the specialized Human Rights committees at the United Nations
23/5/2006	Yasseen Jaber	The restoration of el Shaqif Castle and about the steps that must be followed to start working in this highly important touristic area

Date	Author	Subject
23/5/2006	Mohammed Qabbani	The objecting committees concerning the electricity, phone and water bills
30/5/2006	Nabil Nicolas	The decision of the cabinet no.7 dated 15/1/2006 pertaining to the renewal of the contract for 4 years with PAC company for the operation and exploitation of some areas in the Rafic Hariri International Airport - Beirut
8/6/2006	Ghassan Moukhaiber	On "fighting and preventing corruption"
8/6/2006	Nicolas Fattouche	On Stopping the political intervention of the prime minister and prohibiting the judges to answer to the political desires and the implementation of the provisions of the laws and court cases
22/6/2006	Ibrahim Kanaan	Forcing some officers and soldiers to resign in illegal ways after the events of 13/10/1990
22/6/2006	Ibrahim Kanaan	Not accepting the resignation of the Minister of interior Hasan el Sabe' and the appointment of an acting minister
22/6/2006	Michel Moussa	Application of the texts pertaining to prisons
6/7/2006	Ismail Sucarieh	Inspecting pharmaceutical institutions and hospitals, the medicine prices, drug selling and the handing of medicines
28/9/2006	Abdellatif el Zein	The incompleteness of compensation of the citizens whose houses were destroyed due to the Israeli attacks between 1992 and 1996
8/10/2006	Elias Skaff, Hassan Yaacoub, Salim Aoun, Kamil Maalouf, Asem Araji and Georges Kassarji	The government's goal of reducing the municipalities through the reduction of the overall revenues of the Independent Municipality Fund
8/10/2006	Elias Skaff, Hassan Yaacoub, Salim Aoun, Kamil Maalouf, Asem Araji and Georges Kassarji	The functions of the information service at the General Directorate of the Internal Security Forces
22/10/2006	Salim Aoun	Contracting engineers at the Ministry of Public Works and Transportation
18/4/2006	Assem Araji	Interrogation: the payment of the differences in the salary scale increase issued by virtue of law 716- judges, 717 Public administrations and 718 army
26/5/2006	Boutros Harb	Interrogation: appointing the Higher Council of Judges

DIALOGUE AND CONSULTATION



2006 has witnessed two very important events: the dialogue and the consultation. President Nabih Berri, who invited all the parties to take part in these meetings, took the initiative. This has been a turning point in the relationship between officials and eminent personalities and political activists on the political scene in Lebanon. It was the first time that we see Lebanese politicians, of various ideologies and visions gathered around one table to discuss and consult without any foreign or Arab intervention. These events had a national interest since people had high expectations regarding them. Written and Audio-visual media followed closely and effectively both events held between March 1 and July 12, and between November 1 and 13, 2006, consecutively. The Lebanese and the representatives of the international community were unanimous at describing these meetings as crucial. They have supported the effort of President Berri to remove Lebanon from its suffocating crisis. Each time the tension increased, the Lebanese, of all categories, parties and blocs called upon President Berri to gather the poles around a new table of dialogue and consultation.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DIPLOMACY

PARLIAMENTARY AND ARAB MEETINGS AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

► **1.** The president of the Foreign Affairs and Emigrants committee Abdellatif el Zein and member of the committee MP Pierre Serhal received a Lithuanian delegation headed by the Ambassador of Lithuania Jonas Bosloskas on Thursday 23/2/2006. They discussed the means to promote the bilateral relations between both countries, which is a mutual interest. The president of the committee explained to the delegation the meanings of democracy, freedom and sovereignty yearned for by the Lebanese population and the good relations existing between Lebanon and its Arab brothers. MP el Zein stressed the Israeli interests in Lebanese territory, Land and waters and on the continuous Israeli violations of Lebanon's air, land and sea.

► **2.** A delegation of the committee in charge of preparing a draft law on the electoral system at the Council of State in the Sultanate of Oman convened on Monday 20/3/2006 at the National Assembly with MPs Nawar el Sahili and Serge Torsarkissian. From the Omani part, the Vice -President of the Supreme Court, Majed Abdallah el Alawi, the Director General of borders affairs at the Ministry of Interior Khaled Ben Hilal el Bousaidi, the director of the legal department at the ministry of Interior Shehab Ben Ahmed el Jabiri

and the legal researcher at the Ministry of Interior Hussein Ben Said el Ghazi were present. The conferees have had a general discussion on the electoral law and the Lebanese MPs explained the details of the electoral law and the electoral process as well as the ways to form the electoral lists. They also discussed the issue of adopting the proportional or the majority systems as an electoral criterion. The Omani delegation discussed the issue of the electoral experience at the Sultanate and the presence of two Councils: the Council of State and the Consultative Council. The delegation also discussed the procedures of the Lebanese electoral process.

► **3.** The Rapporteur of the political questions committee at the Parliamentary Association of the Council of Europe, MP Leo Brincat arrived to Lebanon, on 12/6/2006, in a two-day working visit on "the Parliamentary administration", where he met representatives of the parliamentary blocs and a number of senior civil servants at the National Assembly.

► **4.** A delegation of the US Congress visited on Sunday 2/7/2006 the National Assembly for two days in order to prepare for the cooperation program for supporting democracy

and to discuss the independence of the legal authority from the executive power and the controlling of the budget and the rule of law. He also met representatives of the parliamentary blocs and a number of senior civil servants at the National Assembly and agreed with them on having a Lebanese delegation in Washington in September. The delegation participated in a seminar held at the library of the National Assembly and met the heads of parliamentary committees.

► **5.** A big Scottish delegation, including MPs, heads of municipalities, representatives of the civil defense and the organization "Stop the War" visited the National Assembly on Tuesday 17/10/2006. They met with the MPs of the "development and liberation" bloc, MPs: Ali Bazzi, Michel Moussa and Yasseen Jaber, in the presence of the head of the Foreign Affairs department at the Amal Movement Ali Hamdan. The visit aimed at showing solidarity with the Lebanese people and to check on the humanitarian and institutional situation of the country in order to provide help for those who need it, and to transfer the real picture to the people of Scotland. The delegation also met the head of the "Loyalty to the Resistance" bloc, MP Mohammed Raad.



PRESIDENT'S DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES IN 2006

The year 2006 was full of diplomatic activities where President Berri received many delegations and political personalities:



MEETINGS WITH ARAB AND FOREIGN PRESIDENTS AND DELEGATIONS IN 2006

1. The president of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, met on Sunday 15/1/2006 the Qatari Minister of Energy and Industry Abdallah Ben Hamad Al Attieh and discussed with him the relations and developments between both countries and the ways to promote them.

the Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasem Ben Jabr Al Thani and the Qatari Ambassador Jaber Al Suaydi who stated: "I was really pleased to visit Lebanon where I have met the President of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly and Prime Minister Siniora. The discussions turned around the bilateral relations between both countries and what is happening on the Arabic and Lebanese scene".



2. The president of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, met on Wednesday 18/1/2006 a delegation from the US congress that included Frank Wolf and his assistant Daniel Scanling; they were accompanied by US Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman. They discussed the developments in Lebanon and the region as well as the bilateral relations.

5. The President of the National Assembly Mr. Nabih Berri received on Thursday 23/2/2006 the US Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice who visited Lebanon for some hours headed by a large delegation, in the presence of Foreign Minister Fawzi Salloukh and American Ambassador Jeffery Feltman. They discussed the current developments. President Berri insisted during the meeting that "No one in Lebanon can impose anything on the other, and the problems of Lebanon can only be solved through dialogue", reminding everybody "that the preparations for this dialogue have started three months ago".



3. Iran's Foreign Minister Mnosher Metki concluded his official negotiations in Beirut with a visit to the president of the National Assembly on Friday 17/2/2006; he was accompanied by the Iranian Ambassador Massoud Idrissi and the accompanying delegation. After the meeting, the Iranian Ambassador said: "we have held a positive and constructive meeting with the President of the National Assembly Mr. Nabih Berri and we have insisted on the deep and brotherly relationship that ties Lebanon to Iran. We have also affirmed the common determination to go forward in strengthening these relations on all political and economical levels."

6. President Nabih Berri, President of the National Assembly met on Saturday 25/2/2006 the Iranian Minister of Energy Perwez Abdel Fattah who was in an official visit to Lebanon. After the meeting the minister declared: "we have held a very brotherly, frank and constructive meeting. We have had the opportunity to discuss issues concerning the bilateral relations between both brother



4. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri received on Wednesday 22/2/2006 the first deputy - Prime Minister,

countries. I have grasped this good opportunity to forward to him, on behalf of all Iranian officials, warm greetings. I have also expressed the full Iranian support to all wise and constructive stances that he has always taken in the area of protecting and defending the Highest Lebanese national interest. I have also confirmed to him that the Iranian government and the Iranian ministry of energy see that there are many open opportunities for the tightening of the bilateral relations and cooperation between the two brother countries in the areas of energy, electricity and water”.

▶ 7. The President of the National Assembly Mr. Nabih Berri received on Saturday 25/2/2006 the Sudanese delegate Dr. Mustapha in the presence of the Sudanese Ambassador Mr. Ahmed el Bakhit. Ismail said: “It was an opportunity for me to discuss three issues of high importance, which were the Arab Summit that will be held in Khartoum at the end of the following month as well as the themes on the agenda, secondly, the developments in Iraq from which I had just arrived, and the importance of making the necessary efforts to stop the discord that is threatening Iraq as well as intensifying the efforts on the Arab and international levels to get back to the normal situation and thirdly, the developments in Lebanon”.

▶ 8. The president of the National Assembly Mr. Nabih Berri, met on Friday 25/3/2006 the international delegate Terrie Road Larsen with the personal representative of the Secretary General in Lebanon Gere Pederson. Mr. Berri kept them for lunch, and Mr. Larsen declared afterwards: “it was a business lunch with the dear friend His Excellency Mr. Berri. I would like to grasp the opportunity to tell you that I have forwarded him the greetings of the UN Secretary General and his distinguished dialogue initiative among the Lebanese parts. I thank Mr. Berri once again for the great work he is

doing for his country”.

▶ 9. The president of the National Assembly Mr. Nabih Berri received on 1/4/2006 the Secretary General of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine- General Commander- Ahmed Gibril. This visit comes in the context of dealing with the positive results of the dialogue, and particularly regarding the Palestinian files and the Palestinian weapons out of the camps.

▶ 10. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Thursday 27/4/2006 the Director- General of UNESCO, Mr. Koitshiro Matsuura and his delegation that included: Drs. Ahmed Sayyad, Abdel Menhem Othman, Mustapha El Tayyeb, Naimeh Sardani and Anthony Crouse, in the presence of the Secretary of the National Committee of the UNESCO in Lebanon Salwa el Sinioura Baassiri and the Secretary General of the National Council for Scientific Research Dr. Mouin Hamzeh and the director of international Relations and cultural signs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Antoine Shedid.

▶ 11. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Saturday 20/05/2006 the Vice-President of the Bahreini National Assembly Emir Abdel Hadi Marhoun accompanied by the president of the Legal and legislative committee at the Assembly, MP. Youssef Zein el Abedine Zinel. After the meeting, Mr. Marhoun declared: “it was a very pleasant occasion. During all our visits to Lebanon, we insist on meeting with President Berri. It is in fact the best opportunity to promote the relationship between both Lebanese and Bahraini populations and Assemblies.”

▶ 12. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Friday 26/5/2006 a large delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran headed by the Secretary

General of the parliamentary committee to follow up on the issue of Imam Moussa el Sadr, Mr. Said Abou Taleb, with a group of Scholars and members of the Iranian State Council.

▶ 13. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Wednesday 7/6/2006 the minister of foreign affairs of Nagorni Karabakh, Mr. Kevorli Pedrossian and the Chief of Administration for Migration, Refugees and Resettlement under the NKR’s Government Serge Amirkhanian. The Armenian Ambassador in Lebanon, Mr. Levon Der Gevontian accompanied Minister Pedrossian, along with MP Agop Pakradonian, and the Secretary General of the Tashnak party in Lebanon Hovig Moukhitarian, and the member of the Central Committee at the party Mr. Benjamin Bensekjian. The meeting dealt with the bilateral relations and the current issues. The visiting Minister presented the situation in Nagorni Karabakh and the siege imposed on it. In addition, he condemned the Israeli aggressions on Southern Lebanon.

▶ 14. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Monday 3/7/2006 a delegation from the US congress visiting Lebanon in the context of its mission aiming at revitalizing democracies and supporting emergencies. The delegation was headed by MP David Dryer and included MPs: David Brice, John Bosman, Rush Holt, Donald Pine and Michael Capiono, accompanied by a number of officials at the Congress.

▶ 15. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Monday 31/7/2006 the French minister of foreign affairs Douste Blazi who declared: “This is the time for diplomacy and the end of violence; it is an essential condition in order to reach a political accord and a permanent and sustainable cease-fire. We have also discussed the deployment of multinational

armies. All these points are contained in the draft resolution prepared by France to submit to the Security Council. The project resolution also points out the Taef accords and the disarmament of militias, as well as to the security of Israel and the release of the two Israeli soldiers. It also tackles the matter of the Lebanese detainees in Israel, the deployment of the Lebanese army in the South and solving the Shebaa matter. This final issue may happen in two stages; first it may be under the supervision of the UN before it comes back under the Lebanese supervision. We have discussed all these matters in a wonderful climate. France, since the start, has been calling for the immediate stop of the military actions in order to reach a political compromise”.

► 16. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 22/8/2006 the Minister of Foreign affairs of the Netherlands, Bernard Boot, in the presence of the Lebanese minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Fawzi Salloukh. After the meeting, Mr. Boot showed his admiration to the way Mr. Berri explained the situation. He insisted again that all parties should respect Resolution 1701 and fully implement it. Boot added that he was in Lebanon with a three-fold message: first, to offer the political support and show the readiness to offer help and mediation in order to solve this problem, second, to express his pleasure in offering more financial support, i.e. six million eight hundred euros, and to see in the context of this huge destruction, where the Netherlands can be more helpful; third, and despite the fact that we are not part of the UNIFIL- not because there is a lack in the political will, but because we are concerned about participating in many parts of the world like the Balkans, Afghanistan and Africa- but I told President Berri that we are ready to contribute in any other way such as in the maritime field, if the Lebanese government asks for it”.

► 17. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Tuesday 22/8/2006 the Belgian Minister of Development and Assistance Armand Ducker, with the interim Ambassador in Lebanon, Ms. Françoise Gustan and his consultant Michel Lastchenko. The Minister declared after the meeting: “you know that the European Union is organizing a conference to assist Lebanon on August 30, in Stockholm. This conference that I’m working on will be at the economical, social and developmental levels. I sought in the two rounds to see the reality of the situation and the ways to support Lebanon and help it get out of the violent situation”.

► 18. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Monday 28/8/2006 the member at the British House of Commons, the president of the “Respect” party, Georges Gallaway and Mr. Maan Bashour. Gallaway congratulated President Berri for his “recent excellent political, diplomatic and media performance” .

► 19. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 28/8/2006, at 15:00 the UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan. The meeting included the Minister of foreign Affairs, Mr. Salloukh and the members of the UN delegation, Mr. Larsen, Advisor Nambiar and Mr. Pederson. The UN Secretary General with President Berri held a joint press conference.

► 20. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Monday 28/8/2006 the former Iraqi Prime minister Iyad Allawi, head of the “Iraqi unified list” headed by a delegation of Iraqi personalities in the context of a three-day visit to Lebanon during which they will meet with a number of officials and spiritual leaders. Mr. Allawi declared after the meeting: “we have



affirmed to Mr. Berri that all the Iraqi aids that arrived to Lebanon are only a small part of what is on its way. We believe that Lebanon plays a very important and crucial role in the region; it has always been the civilized, bright and virile face of the region. We are here to be with you, our relatives in Lebanon, in bad as well as in good times”.

► 21. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Wednesday 30/8/2006 a delegation from the environmental office in the Gulf, which headquarters are in Riad. The delegation was headed by Mouaffaq el Rasheed and encompassed Mr. Ibrahim el Sayeb, Mr. Mohammad el Dohair, Mr. Andrew Boro, Mr. Peter Wilson, Mr. Ali Safa and Mr. Bassem Jaafar. The delegation offered its services in terms of cleaning up the Lebanese coast and to address the environmental damage caused by Israeli aggression.

22. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Monday 4/9/2006 at his office at the National Assembly the Pakistani Prime minister Shawkat Aziz, in the presence of Minister Fawzi Salloukh and MP Ali Bazzi, and the Pakistani delegation and the Pakistani ambassador in Lebanon Ms. Asma Anisa. President Berri appreciated the visit and the support “of a big friendly country with great importance and influence all over the world, and in particular in the Islamic world”. Then Prime Minister Aziz thanked President Berri and said: “what happened during the last weeks is a real human drama. The Pakistani population supports the Lebanese brothers and sympathizes with them. We hope that the blockade on Lebanon will stop and peace will reign. We hope that all those who have lost their houses and suffered damages will soon get back to their normal life”.

23. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Tuesday 5/9/ 2006 the head of the interim Arab parliament Mohammed Jassem el Sakr, in the presence of the vice - President, Ms. Bahia Hariri and MP Robert Ghanem, in addition to MP Saad Hariri and others MPs. He was among those who launched the initiative of a meeting in Beirut to express solidarity with Lebanon and support it during the difficult period of Israeli aggression.

24. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Thursday 7/9/2006 the German Minister of foreign Affairs Frank Steinmeier who visited Lebanon to create the appropriate conditions for the lifting of the Israeli siege on Lebanon.

25. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Wednesday 20/9/2006 the former Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Koreih heading a delegation. Koreih declared that the meeting

was around the Palestinian situations adding: “we are, like always, very happy with the meeting and we agreed on everything”. Answering a question, he declared that the Lebanese- Palestinian dialogue is on going with the representative of the PLO in Lebanon, Abbas Zaki.

26. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Wednesday 20/9/2006 a Kuwaiti delegation headed by the former Minister of Trade and Industry Mr. Fuad el Zalzal and formed by scholars and Kuwaiti personalities. President Berri discussed with the members of the delegation the aftermath of the Israeli aggressions on Lebanon and the bilateral relations between both countries. Zalzal declared that it is a visit of congratulation to the Lebanese population for their victory. He pointed that Lebanon was the only country that condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He said that the victory has been the pride of the Arabs and the Muslims and that Lebanon has destroyed the legend saying that Israel is the invincible power giving thus hope to all oppressed that they may one day vanquish the oppressor.

27. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 25/9/2006 the president of Caritas International Mr. Denis Viénot heading a delegation that included bishop Francis el Bisri and the Head of Caritas Lebanon, father Louis Samaha. During the meeting they introduced the works of Caritas during the recent events for the displaced and all the steps that they followed to accompany them in their journey back to their villages and towns in the South.

28. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 2/10/2006 a delegation from the US- Arab Chamber of commerce headed by Nasser Baydoun and including a group of business-





men, media and senior personalities. The delegation explained to President Berri a detailed presentation about the developments that went along with the Israeli aggression and its repercussions as well as on the international situation toward Lebanon. The delegation stressed on the importance of the unity of the Arab community in the USA.

▀ 29. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 3/10/2006 the Australian Parliamentary delegation, headed by Ms Lynn Fey, in the presence of the head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau in the “Amal” Movement, Ali Hamdan. The visit comes in the context of evaluating the present situation.

▀ 30. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Friday 6/10/2006 the delegate of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nicholas Matiodakis.

▀ 31. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Wednesday 25/10/2006 the President of the Republic of Kalmykia, one of the 42 Republics of the Russian Federal State, Kirsan Ilumjinov, who was on a special visit to Lebanon. He was accompanied by his private representative in Lebanon, his delegated minister Alain Khoueiry and Ziad Shoueiri along with some other assistants. He declared the intention of his country to contribute in lessening the sufferings of the victims of the Israeli aggression in addition to having offered computer sets to schools with a software teaching children to play “chess”.

▀ 32. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Thursday 26/10/2006 the president of the Socialist Party in France Mr. François Hollande and his delegation, along with the French Ambassador Bernard Emie. Hollande declared after the meeting: “I was pleased to

meet the President of the National Assembly Mr. Nabih Berri. For us, as French people and as socialists, we are attached to democracy in Lebanon where the National Assembly and its president play an essential role”.

▀ 33. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Friday 27/10/2006 in the afternoon, the Vice-Prime Minister, the Qatari Minister of Energy Abdallah el Attiah, who declared after the meeting that “President Berri is playing the role of the referee. He is trying to gather all parties. He has put me in the details of his work and I’m very optimistic”.

▀ 34. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Friday 27/10/2006 the Iraqi Businessman Nazmi Ouji.

▀ 35. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Saturday 28/10/2006 the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy at the EU, Javier Solana, in the presence of Ambassador Patrick Laurent. They have discussed the dialogue initiative and the daily Israeli violations. Solana declared after the meeting: “we have discussed the initiative launched by President Berri addressing all Lebanese political sections. Dialogue is a very important matter and we hope that the dialogue will be constructive for Lebanon and its future. The EU will remain concerned with the process of building Lebanon’s future”. He added: “we think that the 1701 is applicable, despite some difficulties, but the general guidelines have been implemented. In general, we are satisfied with what happened so far”.

▀ 36. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Thursday 23/11/2006 the Secretary General of the Arab League of States Dr. Amr Moussa who came to Lebanon to present his condo-

lences for the death of MP Pierre Amin el Gemayel; Mr. Amr Moussa held a round of visits to officials.

▶ 37. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Friday 24/11/2006 the Indonesian Presidential Delegate to the Middle- East Silalahi, who delivered a letter sent from the Indonesian President Dr. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The letter comes within the efforts to activate the bilateral relations between the countries of the Middle- East and Indonesia.

▶ 38. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Friday 24/11/2006 the assistant of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alexander Sultanov, accompanied by the Russian Ambassador Serguei Poukine. Sultanov declared after the meeting: “we are discussing on a regular basis with Lebanese officials, the situation in the country which worries Russia to see a close country go through such a trouble. The president of the National Assembly has explained to us his point of view on the recent developments and his ideas about the possible role that Lebanon may play and that may enable them to get out of this very dangerous situation”.

▶ 39. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on Tuesday 28/11/2006 the Head of the Foreign Relations Affairs in the Spanish opposition Gustavo De Aristegui. After the meeting held in the presence of the head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the “Amal” Movement, Ali Hamdan, Aristegui declared: “I feel optimistic after the negotiations I have had with President Berri. I see that he is one of the main persons who have worked for Peace since the Taef accords. He is going on in his generous efforts, and he is one of the most important pillars of the country”.

▶ 40. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 2/12/2006 the British Minister of Foreign affairs Margaret Beckett and the delegations accompanying her as well as the British Ambassador in Lebanon, Frances Guy. The British Minister declared after the meeting: “the discussions were very fruitful. We have discussed the recent developments, the difficulties and the problems that Lebanon is facing, and I think it’s very important now that everybody makes all that is possible. This is what the British government has expressed to President Berri; that all efforts should be made in order to reconstruct Lebanon for a better and more prosperous future”.

▶ 41. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 2/12/2006 the German Minister of Former affairs Frank Walter Steinmeier for around one hour, during which they discussed the recent developments. President Berri clarified to the German minister that what is going on at the internal political level and that may be summarized in the necessity of having a government of national unity “has nothing to do with the appreciation all Lebanese feel, and in particular the People of the South, for the UNIFIL. The history of the people of the South with the UNIFIL- goes back to more than a quarter of a century. Consequently, it is not acceptable that some exploit the situation, pretending that suggestions coming form the inside go against the 1701 or the UNIFIL”. President Berri added: “again, we say that as long as these forces are committed to the 1701 and to article 6, and as long as they remain out of the context of the multinational forces- which they are- the Lebanese in general, and the Southerners in particular, remain attached to them. On the other hand, Israel, and since the arrival of the UNIFIL forces, haven’t avoided any opportunity to attack them, targeting especially the French and German contingents”.



42. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 3/12/2006 the Secretary General of the Arab League of States, Dr. Amr Moussa who declared at the end of the meeting: "I have met the President of the National Assembly Mr. Nabih Berri and we had a very important and efficient discussion pertaining to the situation in Lebanon, under the title of: "how to preserve the national unity of the Lebanese and support the process of its achievement and to reach an understanding on a number of existing problems".

43. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 4/12/2006 the Jordanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdallah el Khatib who declared after the meeting: "I have just met His Excellency the President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, and I have forwarded to him the greetings of His Majesty King Abdallah II. I have insured him that Jordan stands with Lebanon during these very exceptional circumstances and this crisis it's going through".

44. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 7/12/2006 the Sudanese Presidential delegate, Othman Ismail who declared after the meeting: "I am here in Lebanon as the envoy of President Al Basheer, President of the Arab Summit". I paid first of all a visit to President Gemayel to present my condolences for the loss of his son, Minister Pierre Gemayel and I'm holding meetings and discussing ideas with the Lebanese political officials in order to find common grounds and to find a solution to this situation prevailing on the Lebanese scene".

45. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 12/12/2006 the Secretary General of the Arab League of States, Amr Moussa, in the pres-

ence of the Sudanese Presidential Delegate Mustapha Othman Ismail and MPs Ali Bazzi and Ali Hassan Khalil. After the meeting Moussa only declared: "There is hope. Give us time we are still at the beginning".

46. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 13/12/2006 the Algerian delegate Mohammad el Taher with whom he discussed recent developments.

47. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 13/12/2006 the Secretary General of the Arab League of States, Amr Moussa, in the presence of the Sudanese Presidential Delegate Mustapha Othman Ismail.

48. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 14/12/2006 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the UAE Sheikh Abdallah Ben Zayed and the accompanying delegation as well as the UAE Ambassador Mohammed Sultan el Suaidi. After a closed session held with President Berri for 45 minutes, the latter left without any declaration.

49. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 16/12/2006 the delegation of the Socialist International Georges Papandreou with whom he discussed the developments in Lebanon and the region. President Berri explained to the delegation the situation in Lebanon in all its aspects.

50. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 18/12/2006 US Senators Christopher Dode and John Kerry along with some officials at the US Congress. They discussed the developments in Lebanon and the region over an hour of time.

51. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 19/12/2006 the Norwegian Prime Minister Mr. Jens Stoltenberg with whom he discussed the developments in Lebanon and the coordination with Norway as well as the work of the UNIFIL forces in Lebanon.

52. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 19/12/2006 the Secretary General of the Arab League of States Mr. Amr Moussa who left without any statement.

53. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 20/12/2006 the Italian Minister of Foreign affairs Massimo Dalema and he discussed with him the current developments in Lebanon and the region, as well as the work of the international forces in the South.

54. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 21/12/2006 the Secretary General of the Arab League of States, Amr Moussa, with the Sudanese presidential delegate Mustapha Othman Ismail.

55. The President of the National Assembly, Mr. Nabih Berri, received on 24/12/2006 the Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi. Prodi described the meeting that went on for one hour as "constructive". He said: "we have discussed the current and future situation of Lebanon and the region, as well as the role of the UNIFIL. I have expressed to him our strong support for the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon as well as the commitment of the UNIFIL in peacekeeping in the region and that the work of these forces now is useful to maintain peace in the region".



MEETINGS WITH AMBASSADORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS RESIDING IN LEBANON

1. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, had on Wednesday 18/1/2006 a very extensive diplomatic activity; he met four ambassadors who warmly welcomed the dialogue initiative. President Berri met the Egyptian ambassador Hussein Darrar who said after the meeting: ‘Our discussions dealt with the latest developments on the Lebanese and Arab scene.’ Then, President Berri met the Iranian Ambassador in Lebanon, Mr. Massoud el Idrissi who said after the meeting: “we have discussed the bilateral relations as well as the current developments at the internal and regional levels.” President Berri also met the Ambassador of Russia, Mr. Serguei Poukine, who said after the meeting: “I have expressed the position of Russia that supports again all the efforts aiming at overcoming the difficult situation of Lebanon, as well as all the efforts aiming at solving the political crisis in Lebanon, this friendly country. President Berri also met with the ambassador of South Korea Yung Sun Kim in a farewell visit. Ambassador Kim left without any statement.

2. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Saturday 21/1/2006 the chief of the Independent International Investigation Committee Serge Brammertz in a first audience protocol visit.

3. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Monday 23/1/2006 the British Ambassador in Lebanon James Watt and discussed with him the recent developments. He also met the Moroccan Ambassador Ali Omlil.

4. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, had on Tuesday 24/1/2006 the US Ambassador Jeffrey Feltman with whom he discussed the recent

developments. He then met the Chargé d’Affaires of the Czech Republic, Sylva Pavlasová.

5. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Wednesday 25/1/2006 the Australian ambassador in Lebanon Stephanie Shwabsky and discussed with her the recent developments and the bilateral relations between both countries.

6. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Thursday 26/1/2006 the French Ambassador Bernard Emie who presented his condolences on behalf of his country for the death of MP Edmond Naim and declared after the meeting: “I have tackled with President Berri our support to the sovereignty, unity, integrity and independence of Lebanon, that has been already reiterated in resolution 1559 on the 23rd of the current month. I also assured him that the international community is more than ever besides Lebanon and congratulates the country for its commitment to the internal dialogue in the context of the full implementation of the 1559. Through this statement the international community encourages all the Lebanese factions to go on with the National dialogue.

7. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Friday 27/1/2006 the Egyptian ambassador in Lebanon, Hussein Darrar, in the presence of the Head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the “Amal” party Ali Hamdan.

8. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Tuesday 31/1/2006 the UNIFIL Commander in Lebanon Major General Alan Pelligrini.

9. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Tuesday 21/2/2006 the ambassador of Russia Serguei Poukine who forwarded to his Excellency an official invitation from the President of the Douma to visit Russia.

10. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Tuesday 21/2/2006 the US ambassador in Lebanon, Jeffery Feltman with whom he discussed the recent events. Feltman declared: "I would like to express my appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Nabih Berri for the time he has spent with us today discussing issues of common interest. I have extended to Mr. Berri, on behalf of my government, our warmest wishes for the initiative that he has called for in order to hold a National Dialogue among the parliamentary blocs."

11. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Tuesday 21/2/2006 the German ambassador Marius Haas. It seems that Ambassador Haas informed president Berri that an EU meeting was held and resulted in a positive support to the dialogue initiative. Then Berri received the Belgian ambassador Stephane de Locker.

12. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Thursday 23/2/2006 the Spanish ambassador Miguel Angel Carrideo Montana in the presence of the head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the Amal party Ali Hamdan, in a farewell visit. Then he met in the presence of Hamdan the Italian ambassador Mistretta. He also met with the ambassador of Lebanon to Abidjan Issam Mustapha who briefed him about the Lebanese community situation in the Ivory Coast.

13. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Thursday 9/3/2006, the representative of the UN

Secretary General Mr. Gere Pederson, whom he briefed on the evolution of the dialogue; Pederson reiterated the "UN support to the dialogue".

14. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Tuesday 9/3/2006 the US ambassador Jeffrey Feltman who declared after the meeting: "I have asked to meet with President Berri today in order to submit a detailed report to my country about the National dialogue. I have grasped the opportunity to reaffirm to him the US support for his efforts to gather the Lebanese officials around one table to discuss the future of Lebanon in entirely Lebanese conditions".

15. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Saturday 11/3/2006 the French Ambassador Bernard Emie who said that they discussed the climate of the Lebanese National Dialogue and "I forwarded to him France's interest in the dialogue and the importance France attaches to this dialogue between the main Lebanese political forces".

16. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Tuesday 11/3/2006 the Saudi ambassador Abdel Aziz Khoja who expressed at the outcome of the meeting "his appreciation of President Berri's role and the support of the kingdom for the initiative of the dialogue and its completion." He said, addressing President Berri: "the work you have started will be engraved in golden letters in the history of Lebanon. We fully appreciate your deed." President Berri answered thankfully and with appreciation to "the Saudi role that supports the National dialogue and stands always besides Lebanon".

17. President Berri met on Thursday 16/3/2006 the Egyptian ambassador in

Lebanon Hussein Darrar who said: "It was a meeting to congratulate him for the success he has achieved with the dialogue so far. It is a great achievement and he has really crossed a very difficult stage confirming the unity of the Lebanese and the unity of opinion and thinking".

18. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Thursday 16/3/2006 the Moroccan ambassador Dr. Ali Omlil and he discussed with him the bilateral relations. The Moroccan ambassador praised the Lebanese National Dialogue and its results.

19. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Monday 20/3/2006 the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan, in Lebanon Gere Pederson, and he discussed with him the issue of the National Dialogue. After the meeting Pederson declared: "the main focus was of course the national dialogue. I have transmitted as well the message of the UN Secretary General whereby he greatly encourages the national dialogue. We think that what we have seen till now is very encouraging."

20. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Saturday 25/3/2006 the Kuwaiti ambassador Ali Sleiman el Said who said "I met President Berri and it was 'as always' a very good and informing meeting. I also forwarded to His Excellency the greetings of our brothers, the officials of Kuwait and their wishes for the dialogue that has been launched at the initiative of President Berri to bear the expected fruits for the interest of our Lebanese brothers. I heard from his Excellency excellent echoes concerning the climate of the dialogue."

21. The President of the National Assembly,

President Nabih Berri, met on Saturday 25/3/2006 the Ambassador of Armenia in Lebanon Mr. Vahan Der Ghevontian in a Protocol visit.

22. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Wednesday 29/3/2006 the Turkish Ambassador in Lebanon Irfan Calal Acar and discussed with him the bilateral relations between both countries.

23. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Friday 31/3/2006 the Russian ambassador Serguei Poukine who declared after the meeting: "I have grasped this opportunity to express to his Excellency President Berri, our support for the completion of the National dialogue in Lebanon wishing for this dialogue all possible success."

24. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Tuesday 4/4/2006 the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran Massoud el Idrissi who said after the meeting that he has held "a very constructive and good meeting with president Berri adding: we discussed with him the political developments as well as the issue of his expected visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran during the current month".

25. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Thursday 20/4/2006 the ambassadors of the South America and Caraibes group: Mexican ambassador Arturo Puente Ortega, ambassador of Brazil Eduardo De Seixi, ambassador of Chile Felipe Du Monceau De Bregedal Perez, ambassador of Colombia Georgina Mallat, ambassador of Cuba Dario De Urra Torriente, ambassador of Paraguay Alejandro Hamed Franco, ambassador of Uruguay Alberto Voss Rupeo, the Venezuelan chargé d'affaires Joel Perez and the

Argentinean chargé d'affaires Kigrimo Nicolas. The ambassadors distributed a communiqué after the meeting in which they declared: "the objective of our visit to President Berri is to promote the respect of the decisions that Lebanon makes through their freely elected authorities and the interest of our governments and populations to see the development of the democratic process in Lebanon. We grasped the opportunity to thank Lebanon for the stances transmitted to us by President Berri on all the issues discussed."

26. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Tuesday 25/4/2006 the US ambassador Jeffrey Feltman; following the meeting, US ambassador declared: "I paid a visit to President Berri to inform him about the US Lebanese discussions held in Washington last week, at the invitation of President Bush. Prime Minister Siniora and his delegation had the opportunity to brief the high officials in my government about the latest developments in Lebanon."

27. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Thursday 27/4/2006 the ambassador of the Islamic republic of Iran Mr Massoud el Idrissi. This comes within a series of farewell visits Mr. Idrissi paid because of the ending of his mandate in Lebanon and his transfer back to the Central Administration, and his appointment as the Advisor for the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Iranian ambassador stated after the meeting: "we have discussed with Mr. Berri the Lebanese National Dialogue issue; we have grabbed this opportunity to reaffirm again the Islamic Republic of Iran's position to support the outcomes of this dialogue".

28. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on





Friday 28/4/2006 the ambassador of the Saudi Kingdom Abdel Azizi Khoja who stated: we have discussed with him the regional and local situations.



29. The President of the National Assembly, President Nabih Berri, met on Friday 5/5/2006 the new Australian ambassador Lindal Sacks in a first audience visit during which they discussed the bilateral relations between both countries. He then received the new Spanish ambassador Miguel Benozo Perea in a Protocol visit where they discussed the developments and relations between both countries.



30. The President of the National Assembly discussed on Thursday 11/5/2006 with the US ambassador Jeffrey Feltman the current situation. Among the visitors of President Berri, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Lebanon, Gere Pederson, then the Austrian ambassador in Lebanon, Georg Mautner Markhov.



31. The President of the National Assembly discussed on Thursday 27/5/2006 with the French ambassador in Lebanon, Mr. Bernard Emie the general developments and the bilateral relations between Lebanon and France. Then he met the head of the European Investment Bank Philippe De Fontaine Vive in the presence of Ambassador Patrick Renaud.



32. The President of the National Assembly met on Monday 5/6/2006 with the Russian ambassador in Lebanon Serguei Poukine, who delivered to him an official invitation to visit Moscow; in return President Berri charged him of delivering a letter in which he condemns and presents his condolences to Moscow for the assassination of the Russian diplomat in Baghdad and the aggression against the car transporting the Russian diplomats.

33. The President of the National Assembly met on Friday 23/6/2006 with a number of ambassadors in Lebanon after a long round trip he started in Egypt then Switzerland then Italy.

34. The President of the National Assembly met on Tuesday 4/7/2006 with the Egyptian ambassador Hussain Darrar who had declared that the serious work now is focusing on Gaza. He added: "we have tackled the issues related to the dialogue, its importance and completion".

35. The President of the National Assembly met on Wednesday 5/7/2006 with the Iranian ambassador in Lebanon, Mohammad Rida Shibani who said after the meeting: "it was an opportunity for us to reaffirm the Iranian permanent and constant stance in supporting the current national dialogue in Lebanon, their brother country".

36. The President of the National Assembly met on Tuesday 15/8/2006 with the ambassador of the Saudi Kingdom Abdel Aziz Khoja with whom he discussed the current developments.

37. The President of the National Assembly met on Tuesday 15/8/2006 with the Iranian ambassador in Lebanon Mohammad Rida Shibani who said after the meeting that he congratulated President Berri and through him Lebanon, for the heroic resistance against the Israeli aggression.

38. The President of the National Assembly met on Monday 15/8/2006 with Egyptian ambassador Hussein Darrar and the Consul Dr. Yasser Alawi. Ambassador Darrar said after the meeting that he discussed with President Berri the cease-fire issue that started in the morning. They also discussed the situation in the South and the rest of Lebanon. President Berri stressed on the

importance of the National Unity for which he was working on day and night.

▶ 39. The President of the National Assembly met on Monday 17/8/2006 with the Kuwaiti ambassador in Lebanon, Ali Suleiman el Said then the ambassador of Iraq in Lebanon, Jawad el Hairi who congratulated him for the great victory against the Israeli aggression praising his role and the solidarity among Lebanese.

▶ 40. The President of the National Assembly met on Friday 18/8/2006 with the US ambassador Jeffrey Feltman and they discussed together the current developments.

▶ 41. The President of the National Assembly met on Monday 22/8/2006 with the Spanish Miguel Benozza Perea who declared after his visit: "I think that the international community should implement this decision. The arrival of the UN forces to Lebanon is a major step; it will help the country become stable and live in peace". He added: "His Excellency insisted in this context on the necessity for Spain and other countries to accelerate the decision making as to their participation to the UN forces, in order for them to come to South Lebanon and secure the borders with Israel".

▶ 42. The President of the National Assembly met on Tuesday 22/8/2006 with the British ambassador James Watt who declared after the meeting: "I have paid a visit to President Berri in order to discuss with him the necessities for reconstruction and human aids, in South Lebanon in particular. We have discussed the British aid program through the Red Cross. I have explained to his Excellency that we have set a plan to build six bridges in the South in a very short period."

▶ 43. The President of the National Assembly met on Friday 25/8/2006 with the Iranian

ambassador Mohammad Rida Shibani who left without giving any statement.

▶ 44. The President of the National Assembly met on Monday 28/8/2006 with the ambassador of the Saudi Kingdom Abdel Aziz Muhieddine Khoja who only stated the following after the meeting: "I have forwarded to President Berri the greetings of the Custodian of the Two Sacred Mosques and his appreciation of the Lebanese resistance".

▶ 45. The President of the National Assembly met on Thursday 21/9/2006 with British ambassador James Watt in a farewell visit followed by the Italian ambassador Mistretta in a farewell visit as well. Then he met with the new Czech ambassador in Lebanon Jan ěl ěk in a first audience protocol visit. The ambassador of Romania in Lebanon Orel Calia paid a farewell visit followed by the EU ambassador Patrick Renaud as well, in a farewell visit. The Qatari ambassador Jabr Bin Abdallah el Soueidi followed in a farewell visit too. All these meetings were in the presence of Ali Hamdan, Head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the "Amal" party.

▶ 46. The President of the National Assembly met on Thursday 28/9/2006 with the UNIFIL Commander, Major General Allan Pellegrini in the presence of Ali Hamdan, head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the "Amal" party. They discussed the developments in the South and the work of the international forces. He met as well the French ambassador Bernard Emie who left without giving any statement. President Berri, in both meetings stressed on the fact that the Israelis didn't really withdraw from the entire territory, knowing that it was promised before the adoption of the 1701 and that the entire withdrawal will not take more than ten days. President Berri insisted on the "responsibility of the UN and the international community to achieve the full Israeli withdrawal and

to stop on-going air, land and sea violations." He also tackled the matter of stealing the Wazzani river water". He insisted on the "good relation between the people of the South and the UNIFIL since 1978 till now. He stated that the problem was and still is the repeated Israeli aggressions against Lebanon."

▶ 47. The President of the National Assembly met the Egyptian ambassador Hussein Darrar in the presence of Ali Hamdan, head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the "Amal" party. He received as well the Executive Secretary of the ESCWA in Lebanon, Ms. Mirvet Tellawi. In the afternoon, he met the Russian ambassador Serguei Poukine in the presence of Hamdan. Poukine said after the meeting: "I heard the substantive motives that prompted President Berri's to postpone his visit to Russia that was supposed to take place in early October".

▶ 48. The President of the National Assembly met on Tuesday 3/10/2006 with the Omani ambassador Amer Ben Hamad el Hajari in a farewell visit.

▶ 49. The President of the National Assembly met on Friday 6/10/2006 with the Iranian ambassador Mohammad Rida Shibani who submitted to him a detailed report on the Iranian efforts made in the context of erasing the impact of the Israeli aggression. He addressed an official invitation to His Excellency to participate in the "important" parliamentary conference to be held in Teheran, the Iranian Capital the following month at the level of the Heads of Parliaments of the Asian States.

▶ 50. The President of the National Assembly met on Tuesday 10/10/2006 with the new Italian ambassador Gabriele Checchia and the new Cypriot ambassador Ms. Erato Kozakou-Markoullis.

51. The President of the National Assembly met on Thursday 12/10/2006 with the Egyptian ambassador Hussain Darrar who stated that he discussed with President Berri his visit to Saudi Arabia and its positive outcomes, as well as the negotiations with the High Saudi officials. He declared: "The efforts of Mr. Berri are known as well as the importance he gives for returning to the dialogue. This is a position that we fully support in Egypt".

52. The President of the National Assembly met on Thursday 26/10/2006 with the new British ambassador Ms. Frances Guy and he discussed with her the relationship as well as the circumstances of the region.

53. The President of the National Assembly met on Thursday, at his residency, 2/11/2006, with the Egyptian Ambassador Hussein Darrar who said that they have discussed the recent developments, as well as the dialogue that is expected to start the following week and the close contacts that His Excellency is making with all Lebanese, internationals and external parties.

54. The President of the National Assembly met on Friday 3/11/2006 the ambassador of the US to Lebanon Jeffery Feltman in the presence of Ali Hamdan, head of the Foreign Affairs Bureau of the "Amal" party. After the meeting, Feltman declared: "I have briefed his Excellency on my consultations in Washington where I heard a lot of testimonies about our strong commitment to the independence of Lebanon". He added: "I have also grabbed the opportunity of this meeting with President Berri to congratulate him for his initiative, i.e. calling upon the entire Lebanese leaders to consult among each other. In our view, President Berri's use of dialogue rather than confrontation provides the Lebanese a good opportunity to move forward in a constructive way. He

wished President Berri "all the success possible in the deliberations he will be leading in the coming weeks". He repeated "that President Berri isn't on any black list of people prohibited to enter the US".

55. The President of the National Assembly met on Friday 17/11/2006 the Spanish ambassador Miguel Perea who said after the meeting: I first wanted to convey to him my government's appreciation for the last communiqué of the Amal party for the presence of UNIFIL forces in Lebanon, and in particular the Spanish troops. The second issue is related to the initiative of Spain, France and Italy on the Middle East and the recent conflicts of the Palestinian territories. We believe that it's the cause of all problems in Lebanon and other Arab countries.

56. The President of the National Assembly met on Saturday 18/11/2006 US ambassador Jeffrey Feltman and discussed with him the latest developments. Feltman refused to give any statement.

57. The President of the National Assembly met on Monday 20/11/2006 the Saudi ambassador to Lebanon, Abdel Aziz Khoja, and he discussed with him the developments in the direction of an exit from this current political crisis. Then president Berri met on Monday 20/11/2006 in the presence of the Head of Foreign Affairs Bureau of the Amal party, Ali Hamdan, ambassador of Russia to Lebanon, Serguei Poukine who didn't make any statement.

58. The President of the National Assembly met on Thursday 23/11/2006 the Egyptian ambassador Hussein Darrar and discussed with him the current developments.

59. The President of the National Assembly met on the 2nd/12/2006 the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Lebanon,



Mohammad Rida Shibani who said afterwards: “No doubt that Lebanon is going through a very difficult and critical period. Hence, we are here to meet President Berri to discuss with him the various current political developments in Lebanon.”

▶ 60. The President of the National Assembly met on Friday 5/12/2006 the ambassador of Russia Serguei Poukine, who said after the meeting: “I would like to thank the president for this very useful interview, in this very critical period that Lebanon is going through. I would like to tell you that, in Russia, day after day, we feel more worried about the on-going events in this friendly country.”

▶ 61. The President of the National Assembly met on the 6th /12/2006 Nabih Berri the ambassador of the Saudi Kingdom Abdel Aziz Khoja with whom he discussed the latest developments.

▶ 62. The President of the National Assembly met on the 6th/12/2006 the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General Gere Pederson with whom he discussed the current events. Then president Berri met the US ambassador Jeffrey Feltman for more than one hour and discussed with him the latest events.

▶ 63. The President of the National Assembly met on the 8th/12/2006 the ambassador of the Saudi Kingdom to Lebanon Abdel Aziz Khoja. The Saudi ambassador declared after the second meeting in 24 hours, his optimism saying: as long as the engine is in the hands of president Berri, I feel optimistic”.

▶ 64. The President of the National Assembly met on the 11th/12/2006, the British ambassador Frances Guy in the presence of Ali Hamdan and discussed the latest developments.

▶ 65. The President of the National Assembly met on the 11th/12/2006 the Indian ambassador Ninguisha Lhofom. The ambassador addressed to president Berri an official invitation to take part in the Indian International Conference in the 100th anniversary of the Indian Leader Ghandi in next December 29 and 30.

▶ 66. The President of the National Assembly met on 12th/12/2006 the ambassador of the EU to Lebanon Patrick Laurent who declared after the meeting: “it is true that this is a protocol visit, as I was in Lebanon two months ago. We have discussed the very complex political situation in Lebanon. What is important for us as a European community working to assist Lebanon’s emphasis on the necessity that all political forces reach some common grounds for Lebanese”.

▶ 67. President of the National Assembly met on the 13th/11/2006 the Yemeni ambassador Dr. Mohammed Abdel Majid Cobaty who declared after the meeting: “we are always happy to meet president Berri, the head of a main and essential institution in the Lebanese system.”

▶ 68. The President of the National Assembly met on the 15th /12/2006 the ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Abdel Aziz Khoja with whom he discussed the recent developments in Lebanon, in the light of the tour of the Secretary General of the Arab League of States Dr. Amr Moussa and the Sudanese delegate Mustapha Othman Ismail.

▶ 69. The President of the National Assembly met on the 15th/12/2006 the special representative of the UN secretary General in Lebanon Gere Pederson and discussed with him the situation. Pederson described the meeting as “very good. We discussed the latest developments in Lebanon”. Then, he received the Honorary Consul Ramzi Haidar.

▶ 70. The President of the National Assembly met on the 18th/12/2006 the French ambassador Bernard Emie with whom he discussed the current situations. After the meeting, ambassador Emie declared: “I visited President Berri today in order to discuss with him several matters.”

▶ 71. The President of the National Assembly met on the 21st/12/2006 the ambassador of the Saudi Kingdom in Lebanon, Abdel Aziz Khoja and discussed with him the latest developments. The Saudi ambassador left without any statement.

▶ 72. The President of the National Assembly met on the 21st/12/2006 the ambassador of the Russian Federation of States in Lebanon Serguei Poukine who declared at the end of the meeting: “I have seized this happy opportunity of meeting with the President in order to express to him the deep feelings of respect that Russia has for this very important person who will find the peaceful solution to the political crisis Lebanon is facing nowadays.”

PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS VISITS ABROAD

1. PARLIAMENTARY WORK VISITS

► The Inter-Parliamentary Union/Geneva held between December 4 and 6, 2006 an international conference about the Role of the Parliamentary Committees in promoting equality between men and women and the empowerment of women development. Delegates from more than 40 National Assemblies participated in the conference in addition to many experts, consultants and lecturers. MP Gilberte Zouein, head of the Woman and Child Committee represented the Lebanese National Assembly. MP Zouein had an intervention in which she detailed the activities and role of the Lebanese parliamentary committee in following up on the works of the Women CSOs in Lebanon and the efforts deployed in promoting gender equality in civil, economical and social aspects. MP Zouein also highlighted the political rights enjoyed by the women in Lebanon since 1953.

► In the context of the parliamentary cooperation between the Lebanese and French National Assemblies and the UNDP, a delegation of the Lebanese National Assembly had a work visit to the French National Assembly between 26 November and 2 December 2006. The Service of Parliamentary Cooperation at the International and Defense Affairs Directorate at the French National Assembly organized this visit and prepared and implemented a work program for the delegation; it also provided all the residency requirements in Paris. The delegation members were:

- Dr. Michel Moussa, Former Minister, member of the National Assembly Board, head of the Human Rights Committee.

- Ayman Shoucair, member of the National Assembly Board and member of the Agriculture and Tourism Committee

- Jawad Boulos, member of the National Assembly Board and member of the Finance and Budget Committee

- Badr Wannous, Rapporteur of the Public Works Committee and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee

- Samer Fawaz, head of Service, Administration and Justice Committee.

Mr. Elie Khoury, director of the UNDP Project at the parliament accompanied the delegation.

The objectives of this visit focused on the mechanisms of action in the French National Assembly, and in particular in the following:

First: Parliamentary and public organization

- The role and function of the Bureau, the presidents' conference, the vice-presidents and the Secretary General of the National Assembly.

- Financial allowances for MPs.

- Choosing the Civil Servants, their legal situation and the evaluation of their work.

- The Financial administration of the French National Assembly

- International Parliamentary Affairs

- Parliamentary supervision over the State Budget.

Second: Higher Education in France

Third: political Meetings

► In the context of the parliamentary cooperation between the Lebanese and French National Assemblies and the UNDP, a delegation from the Lebanese National Assembly paid a work visit to the French National Assembly between June 26 and 30, 2006. The Service of Parliamentary Cooperation at the International and Defense Affairs Directorate at the National Assembly organized this visit and prepared and implemented a work program for them and provided for all their residency requirements in Paris. The delegation members were:

- Fouad el Saad, former minister and member of the Administration and Justice Committee.

- Ayoub Hmayyed, former minister, head of the Agriculture and Tourism Committee

- Serge Torsarkissian, member of the National Assembly Board and member of both Administration and Justice Committee and Agriculture and Tourism Committee.

- Nehmtallah Abi Nasr, Rapporteur of the Agriculture and Tourism Committee and member of the Administration and Justice Committee.

- Mustapha Hashem, member of the Public Works, Transport and Water Committee.

Mr. Elie Khoury, director of the UNDP project at the National Assembly accompanied the delegation.

The delegation also met during the visit the Presidents of both, the National Assembly and the Senate, as well as High Officials at the National Assembly. They also met the officials in charge of the Middle East and North African affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



▶ A parliamentary delegation left Beirut to Paris, on Sunday 26/3/2006 headed by MP Walid Eido. The delegation members were MPs: Yeghia Gerjian, Selim Salhab, Hussein el Hajj Hassan, Antoine Ghanem and the Director of the UNDP project at the National Assembly, Elie Khoury. The aim of the visit was to discuss cooperation possibilities between the French Senate on one hand and the Lebanese National Assembly on the other. The developments on the Lebanese scene, dialogue and the Lebanese- Syrian relations were the subject of discussions of the delegation in Paris. The visit lasted a week, where the delegation met officials at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the French Parliament. The delegation took part as well in two separate sessions at the National Assembly and the Senate. At the end of the visit, the delegation prepared a report about Decentralization in France as well as all the lessons to be learnt in order to set the bases of decentralization in Lebanon.



▶ In the context of the cooperation agreement between the Belgian Chamber of Representatives of the Belgian Kingdom and the Lebanese National Assembly, signed by

Presidents Nabih Berri and Herman De Croo in Brussels on November 25, 2004, a delegation from the Lebanese National Assembly paid a work visit to the Belgian Chamber of Representatives, between January 15 and 22, 2006. On the program, it was scheduled for the delegation to visit Strasbourg and the French National Assembly. The General Directorate for the Belgian Chamber of Representatives coordinated the visit to Belgium and Strasbourg, prepared and implemented the agenda. It has also provided for the good residency of the delegation members. The Directorate for International and Defense Affairs and Parliamentary Cooperation Service at the French National Assembly, took the charge of organizing the visit to Paris.

The members of the delegation were MPs:

- Ayman Shoucair, member of the Assembly Board and member of the Agriculture and Tourism Committee
- Ali Khreiss, member of the National Education and Culture Committee and member of the Woman and Child Committee.
- Edgar Maalouf, member of the Defense, Interior and Municipalities Committee.
- Dr. Pierre Serhal, member of the Defense, Interior and Municipalities Committee, the Foreign Affairs Committee and the Woman and Child Committee.
- Dr. Riad Serhal, member of the Health, Work and Social Affairs Committee, the Agriculture and Tourism Committee and the IT Committee.
- Jamal Jarrah, member of the Public Works, Energy, Water and Transport Committee and the Woman and Child Committee.
- Mr. Elie Khoury, director of the UNDP project at the Lebanese National Assembly.



The meetings in Belgium focused mainly on the constitutional provisions protecting minorities and the parliamentary work as well as the European parliament and the

European Court for Human Rights.

► At the invitation of the French Senate and the French government, a Lebanese parliamentary delegation paid a work visit to France between 10 and 15th of December 2006. The delegation members were:

- MP. Robert Ghanem, head of the Administrative and Justice Committee
- MP. Farid el Khazen, Rapporteur of the Foreign Affairs Committee and member of the National Education, Higher Education and Culture Committee.
- Mr. Elie Khoury, director of the UNDP project at the Lebanese National Assembly

Some circumstances prevented the participation of some members who were supposed to be among the delegation originally. The officials of the Ministry of Higher Education in France, presenting the main focus of the visit, explained the characteristics of the new European system of Higher Education, the difficulties of implementing it, and the advantages gained by the students who enroll in it. The meeting included a visit to the University of Technology in Troyes where the delegation members had a presentation about the university, its specializations, the preparation of its students, and the easiness of market access for them at their graduation, and its openness to technological innovations. During the visit, the delegation had the opportunity to meet with the president of the Senate, Christian Poncelet, and the President of the National Assembly, Jean Louis Debrey, the Vice- President of the Senate, the head of the Lebanese-French Friendship group Adrien Goutiron, and the heads of both Foreign Affairs Committee and Cultural Committee at the Senate, Serge Vinçon and Jacques Valade, as well as the Secretary General of the Parliament, Alain Delcamp and the officials in charge of the Middle East and North African Affairs Herve Besaucenot, Remy Boualigau and Jean



Christophe Augé. The members of the delegation felt during these meetings the concerns of the French officials on the conditions prevailing in Lebanon, and about the severe crisis it's going through.

► In the context of the cooperation program since 2002 between the French Senate and the Lebanese National Assembly, a Lebanese delegation visited France between June 26 and July 1, 2006. The delegation members were:

- Michel Moussa, head of the Human Rights committee
- Samir el Jisr, former minister and member of the Administration and Justice Committee.
- Gilberte Zouein, head of the Woman and Child committee
- Ghassan Moukhaiber, Rapporteur of the Human Rights Committee
- Nawar el Sahili, rapporteur of the

Administration and Justice Committee.

Mrs. Zeina Shoucair, from the UNDP project at the Lebanese National Assembly accompanied the delegation.

During the visit, the delegation visited the Human Rights institutions in France and was introduced to the role of the MPs in this context. The visit also allowed the delegation to discuss the situation of Human Rights in Lebanon, and to exchange views about the Lebanese-French relationships. The delegation met, during the visit, the Advisory National Committee for Human Rights as well as the Institution of Mediator of the Republic and Advocator of Children Rights as well as the National committee of information and Freedom, and the higher authorities for equality and anti-poverty and anti-marginalization and the secularism implementation and prison administration committee.



2. PARTICIPATION OF THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN CONFERENCES AND PARLIAMENTARY WORKSHOPS



► His Excellency President Berri participated in the Seventh Conference of the Asian Parliaments Association held on 12/11/2006 at the Conference Palace in Tehran under the sponsorship of the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadi Nijad and in his presence. The Lebanese delegation was formed of MPs Ali Ammar and Hassan Hobballah as well as the Secretary General of the National Assembly Adnan Daher and the Secretary General of Foreign Affairs, Bilal Charara and the head of the Media Department Mohammad Ballout. At the end of the conference, the final statement condemned the ongoing Israeli crimes in Palestine and Lebanon. The conference called upon the Asian governments to try stopping the monstrous massacres that are committed by Israel, in front of the entire world, in these countries. The congress called for an Asian clearance of Mass Destruction weapons and to put an end to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The statement affirmed at the same time the right of each country to benefit peacefully of the nuclear techniques. It also reaffirmed the importance of the UN role in establishing international security and peace and to commit all the countries of the

world in clear, transparent and equal relations.

► President Nabih Berri held a series of visits in the Arab and International countries where he met with kings and leaders. The visits aimed at trying to find a solution to the Lebanese crisis.

► MPs Farid el Khazen, Hussein el Hajj Hassan and Hagop Pakradounian, took part in a regional seminar on “the parliament and the reform of party laws” (first meeting for the work group) held in Rabat- Morocco between 17 and 19 March 2006, in partnership with the POGAR- UNDP program and the Center for Studies and Researches in Social Sciences at the University Mohammad V- Rabat. The seminar that inaugurated the works of the parliamentary group on reform and political party law focused on the review and evaluation of the political party law in the Arab region along with some new suggestions for political party reform and newly reformed political party laws. It also focused on suggesting and reforming political party laws. The elected MPs from Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine – representing more

that 15 Arab political parties- along with experts from the region (including Egypt and Yemen) discussed a regional study about the challenges of reforming political parties in the light of the international expertise in this field. The participants presented case studies about the participating countries, and the focus was mainly on the basic role of the parliament as a forum for the socio-political forces in the country in order to interact and reach unanimity as to the reform suggestions and initiatives.

► A group of MPs, including MPs Yassin Jaber, Edgar Maalouf and Antoine Ghanem participated in a regional seminar on the management of the security sector and the parliamentary supervision in the Arab region, held in Beirut- Lebanon between May 12 and 14, 2006. The seminar was held in partnership between POGAR and the Geneva Center for Democratic Control over Armed Forces (DCAF). The seminar gathered around 50 participants, among which MPs and representatives of the security sector, international and regional experts who have presented and discussed the international and regional practices in the field of man-



agement and reform of the security sector in an effort to shed the light on the important role of MPs and parliaments at the level of policy making, and Democratic control over the security sector. This meeting that discussed a critical matter in the region was an unprecedented occasion for parliamentarians from six Arab countries (Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine) to interact with decision makers and experts in the field.

▶ A group of MPs including Hagop Pakradounian and Ghassan Moukhaiber participated in a seminar on the Parliaments and the reform of party laws, held in Amman-Jordan, between December 18 and 19, 2006. The work group was formed in March 2006 and it gave the MPs and experts the opportunity to see and evaluate the current laws on political parties in the Arab countries as well as the recent recommendations related to reforming the political parties and the newly reformed political party laws. They also discussed the issue of the role of parliaments as to proposing and reforming laws on political parties. This work group aims at providing a forum that enables them to present the nature of national dis-

cussions with regards to political parties in the Arab region, and in particular the current discussion on regulatory mechanisms that rules the foundation of the political party and its work in the region.

▶ The international parliamentary conference held in the Venezuelan capital, Caracas, ended its activities. Among the participants, was a delegation from the Loyalty to the Resistance bloc, MPs Hassan Fadlallah and Dr. Ali Mokdad. The conference adopted the Caracas declaration, which calls for the necessity of refusing any foreign interference in the affairs of other countries along with any attempt to impose tutorship, particularly the American. The declaration reiterated its support to the Palestinian case and the right of return for the Palestinian refugees to their land. The conference affirmed the necessity for the US forces to withdraw from Iraq and for the Israeli forces to withdraw from the Arab occupied territories in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon.

PARLIAMENTARY UNIONS AND CONFERENCES OF WHICH LEBANON IS PART

- ▶ The International Parliamentary Union
- ▶ The Arab Parliamentary Union
- ▶ The Arab-African Dialogue
- ▶ The Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophonie
- ▶ The Islamic Conference Organization Member States Union
- ▶ The Asian Parliaments Association for Cooperation and Peace
- ▶ The International Conference for Defending the Armenian Cause
- ▶ The Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)
- ▶ The Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population
- ▶ The Francophone Youth Parliament
- ▶ The Scout Parliamentarian Union
- ▶ The Conference on Mediterranean Security and Cooperation
- ▶ The Monaco Summit
- ▶ The Children's Parliament

PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP COMMITTEES BETWEEN THE LEBANESE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AND ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTS

The parliamentary friendship committees work on tightening the relations between the parliaments and the parliamentarians. These committees started in many European parliaments. In addition to their traditional activities of receiving and dispatching the delegations, they work on establishing political and friendship relations and encouraging economic and cultural cooperation between the concerned countries as well as supporting the concerned countries and the decentralized cooperation and contributing to the inter-parliamentary cooperation.



- The Lebanese friendship committee with China
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Japan
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Australia
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Indonesia
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Turkey
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Armenia
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Pakistan
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Kuwait
- The Lebanese friendship committee with the United Arab Emirates
- The Lebanese friendship committee with the Yemen Republic
- The Lebanese friendship committee with the Kingdom of Bahrain
- The Lebanese friendship committee with the Islamic Republic of Iran
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Tunisia
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Chad
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Senegal
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Gabon
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Nigeria
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Guinea Bissau
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Ivory Coast
- The Lebanese friendship committee with South Africa
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Benin
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Austria
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Germany
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Italy
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Bulgaria
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Cyprus
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Belgium
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Czech Republic
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Bolivia
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Lithuania
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Romania
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Slovakia
- The Lebanese friendship committee with the Federation of Russia
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Great Britain
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Greece
- The Lebanese friendship committee with the French National Assembly
- The Lebanese friendship committee with the French Senate
- The Lebanese friendship committee with the European Parliament
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Canada
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Cuba
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Mexico
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Venezuela
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Colombia
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Brazil
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Poland
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Argentina
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Uruguay
- The Lebanese friendship committee with Chile

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S PUBLICATIONS

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S WEBSITE

The IT department at the National Assembly covers all the activities of the National Assembly, those of the President, the committees and the parliamentary meetings.

The site includes the Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the president and the MPs, statements about the formation of the committees, all legislative and supervisory Plenary sessions, the MP parliamentary activities, draft laws and proposals, the questions and interrogations, the activities of the specialized committees, the parliamentary diplomacy at the local, Arab and International fields as well as the conferences and workshops held or hosted by the National Assembly.

It's important to note that all the activities mentioned above are published in Arabic and French. The Internet is considered a daily news site covering all the activities of the legislative institution in Lebanon.

The official Website of the Lebanese Parliament is:

www.lp.gov.lb

THE PARLIAMENTARY LIFE

It's a quarterly magazine dealing with the activities of the Presidency of the National Assembly and the activities of the parliamentary committees. It contains the legal texts approved by the parliament as well as the questions and interrogations. It covers constitutional, political and international studies related to the legislation. It also includes cases and documents.

THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT ISSUES BULLETIN

It offers, through quarterly files, targeted and centered information on global developmental issues that are directly linked to the legislative activities in their general aspect and to the practice in the national context in the light of the modern global legislations. It includes information related to the issues, concerns and news in the field of development as evoked worldwide. Information in this bulletin is prepared on the basis of international conferences and conventions held as well as on the basis of issues dealt with at the national level.

THE ANNUAL REPORT

It is issued in the first quarter of each year and covers the activities of the National Assembly of the previous year. It was issued the first time in 2003. It contains the activities of the President of the National Assembly, the plenary and the parliamentary relations of the National Assembly with the Arab and international parliaments.

THE MONTHLY PARLIAMENTARY BULLETIN

The monthly parliamentary bulletin is issued by the National Assembly with the aim of informing the public about the news of the National Assembly and the activities of its various bodies: the plenary, the Presidency, the Bureau, the parliamentary committees and the General Secretariat with all its directorates. The bulletin aims at providing relevant Arab and international parliamentary information that would be useful for the Members of Parliament and anyone who is interested in the parliamentary news.

THE STUDIES AND INFORMATION SERIES

In 2006, 10 issues were published about: Decentralization, Parliaments and Human rights, the Parliament's Role in the Success of the National Dialogue, Political Parties from a Comparative World Perspective, the National Fund for Social Security, the Parliamentary Oversight on the Executive branch, the Relationship Between the Civil Society and Parliament and the Government, the Senates in the World, the Promotion of Human Rights Concepts in the Parliamentary Work and the Role of the Parliament in Poverty Reduction.





For more information, please contact:

The National Assembly : Tel. : (01) 982044 → (01) 982058 - (01) 982100 Fax : (01) 982059

Joint Project UNDP/Parliament : Tel. : (01) 982151 - Fax : (01) 982144