

Declaration of the recommendations of the First National Conference Against Illicit Trade

Lebanon, March 2018

We are the representative of security agencies, judiciary, military and administrative bodies in Lebanon: the Financial Prosecution, the Internal Security Forces, the Directorate of General Customs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy and Trade, the Association of Lebanese Industrialists and the Regie Libanaise Des Tabacs et Tombacs , we participated in the First National Conference against Illicit Trade, which was held in Beirut-Lebanon on 28 March 2018, which came as follows:

In response to a growing awareness of the issue of illegal trade that threatens the national economy and the security, social and commercial stability of our country.

And based on the desire of the parties to participate in strengthening the policy of cooperation in order to protect the national economy and immune it from the various challenges that may face it.

And in recognition of mutual responsibility and in order to protect our National economy and in order to develop a comprehensive national vision to confront this phenomenon.

Since the negative impact of illegal trade affects precisely:

- National industry and various legally legitimate goods and services.
- Tax incomes, which are essential to the sustainability of the national treasury.
- The economic cycle, which involves developing the status of the industrial, agricultural and commercial sectors alike.

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Therefore, for all of the above, and in our belief in unifying all efforts to overcome all the difficulties facing to awareness against illegal trade in Lebanon.

The participants agreed to consider the First National Conference to Fight Illicit Trade as the cornerstone for the development of a joint national plan to fight illegal trade by transforming the outcomes of this conference into concrete action and concrete reality over the next five years as follows:

First: Emphasize and adopt all the outputs of the "First National Conference Against Illicit Trade", which is the basic premise and the actual nucleus of this meeting, which clearly shows the importance of fighting this scourge.

Second: The need to develop a joint work plan between the participating institutions and other associations and establishments dealing with combating smuggling in order to remedy the risks facing the national economy by taking the following measures:

1- Raising the level of coordination among the concerned parties through:

- Holding joint meetings and assigning coordinators in various institutions to follow up this file periodically.
- Forming a joint committee comprising the various security and judicial bodies, enhancing the level of coordination among them and assisting in the investigation, intelligence and prosecution.
- Provide advice in the fields of joint work and exchange of similar experiences between the participating parties.
- Seeking to establish a common national database that will allow the exchange of information.

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2- Raise awareness among public opinion about the negative effects of illicit trade on the national economy by intensifying awareness campaigns and disseminating information about the health, social and economic risks of this phenomenon.

3- Updating legislation and laws:

- Strict enforcement of judicial provisions.
- Follow up the latest relevant international legal legislations and study the possibility of applying them in Lebanon.
- Seeking to accelerate the issuance of judicial provisions against violators and to force them to pay fines.
- Intensifying studies, research and national statistics that provide a clear reading of the reality of smuggling.

4- Enhancing monitoring mechanisms and border management through:

- 5- Activate the border control and strengthen the capabilities of the concerned authorities to monitor the illegal crossings.
- 6- Adoption of modern technologies to simplify customs procedures at the legitimate border crossings.
- 7- Strict control of resources for the sale of illegal goods.
- 8- Enhancing and building capacities of human resources for border control.

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- 5- **Supporting the national industry** through studying ways to support the national industry and the possibilities of reducing the cost of its production in order to compete the price and quality of smuggled goods, and develop a program for the development and protection of the industrial sector.

Third: The participants are obliged to sign this declaration, which requires the development of an implementation plan for all the above mentioned points.

Fourth: The participants shall consider this declaration and to ensure its effectiveness and continuity, subject to continuous annual review, allowing all parties to meet whenever necessary to identify ways to stimulate and develop cooperation and to put things right.

Adopted in Beirut on 28 March 2018