

(Translated from Arabic)

Lebanese Republic
Ministry of Energy and Water
General Directorate for Investment

No.: [illegible]

Beirut, [illegible]

To: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Subject: Request from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for Member States to express their views on human rights and access to drinking water

Ref.: Your letter No. 8/429, dated 7 March 2007, registered with us as No. 1031, dated 26 March 2007

Further to the subject and reference mentioned above, we should like to present the following information:

The water sector in Lebanon is regulated by a set of laws, regulations and decrees, some of them new and some of them old and still in effect. Of these, we shall mention:

- The Water Sector Regulation Act No. 221 of 29 May 2000, as amended, article 1 of which states that the protection and development of water as a natural resource, in the framework of conservation of the environment and the balance of nature, is a crucial public service.
- Article 2 of the Act enumerates the functions of the Ministry of Energy and Water as follows:

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- To control the quality of surface and groundwater and establish standards therefor.
 - To establish a general scheme for the allocation and distribution of drinking water and irrigation water in the State and to design and continuously update a framework plan for water and sanitation.
- Article 4 of the Act states that the functions of public water institutions are to control the quality of distributed drinking water and irrigation water and the quality of water discharged from drains and purification plants.
- The Environment Protection Act No. 444 of 29 July 2002.

The Lebanese Standards Institution (Libnor) contributed to the establishment, in 1970, of a specification for drinking water containing norms for drinking water and water for other uses. It subsequently reviewed and updated this specification, in 1999, defining drinking water as water which is safe for human consumption and satisfies a whole range of specific criteria that are listed in the specification.

The drinking water supply covers virtually all of Lebanon and all residents of Lebanon. In addition, regulation and control of drinking water quality is carried out under the supervision of the Ministry of Health.

The main and branch laboratories of every public water facility have been modernized with a view to ensuring the quality and safety of the water distributed to users. The Ministry oversees the work of the laboratories and their personnel, through experts contracted to perform this task. Their capacities are constantly being developed and they then train laboratory personnel to test water regularly and to treat it, where necessary, prior to distribution.

- A new draft law on water was written in a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Energy and Water and the French Embassy, with the latter donating its services as a gift (a copy of the draft law, in Arabic and French, is attached).

(Signed): Mohammed al-Safdi
Minister of Energy and Water a.i.
