

The first five months of 2008 did not witness any remarkable change in the situation in Lebanon. After a long break in the activity of the Parliament, a new President was elected, the government continued to pursue the affairs of the country as stipulated and allowed for in the Constitution. Inevitably, this situation affected all the institutions of the country, among which the CDR.

After the election of his Excellency President Michel Sleiman, Lebanon entered a new phase with the formation of the second government of Mr Siniora, and the resuming of the activities of the Parliament. It was characterized by a real collaboration between the constitutional institutions leading to a beneficial effect on the various sectors and institutions.

Regarding the CDR, the Parliament had concluded in 2008 seven funding agreements for development of projects in different sectors and regions across Lebanon with a total value of US \$ 367 million, in addition to a funding agreement to buy oil derivatives with a total value of US \$ 100 million. Moreover, the Parliament voted a law to allow the government to issue Treasury bills for an amount of US \$ 200 million to settle dues to contractors resulting from an acute rise in the prices of building materials during specific periods of the previous years. In 2009, the Parliament is expected to conclude a series of funding agreements in amounts exceeding US \$ 500 million in addition to the adoption of a new law that will allow the government to issue treasury bills for a total amount of US \$ 200 million to pay for the expropriations needed in several projects to be executed in the coming years.

We are providing these figures to show the interdependence between the work of the CDR and the constitutional institutions especially the



Council of Ministers and the Parliament. Indeed, the amounts approved by the Parliament and those expected to be approved in the near future will provide about US \$ 1.3 billion to be spent within the coming few years on new projects and expropriating the related land or to pay the dues of the Lebanese Republic to various parties.

In addition to what has been said, the CDR was able to benefit from several grants to cover funding gaps in projects partly financed through foreign loans. The outcomes will soon show in 2009 when several contracts concerning belated important projects will be signed.

The pursuing efforts of CDR in funding and implementation, has not prevented it from thinking about planning and programming. Indeed, the Council of Ministers has dedicated a special session in November 2008, to discuss the Comprehensive land use plan. The plan, prepared in collaboration with the General Directorate for Urban Planning, was well received by the Council of Ministers who constituted a special committee headed by the deputy to the Prime Minister to study the plan. The CDR hopes that the coming year will witness the issuance of the decree concerning the plan, thus for the first time we will have a long term strategic vision with the guiding principles to the use of the land and the general investments.

Moreover, in the coming period the Parliament will start discussing two very important draft laws referred by the Council of Ministers in 2007. The first one is the draft law concerning procurement and the establishment of administration for procurement and the second one is the draft law concerning the general conditions of the public works projects. Adopting these two laws will have a significant effect on the procedures of awarding public contracts providing more equity in



competition and more clarity in defining and protecting the rights and obligations of all the concerned parties.

Concerning the work within the CDR, 2008 witnessed the recruitment of new employees who passed the examinations conducted by the Council of Civil Service. The process of filling the remaining vacancies is ongoing.

In conclusion, I assure my dear reader, my personal engagement and that of all the staff at the CDR to fulfill the mission of construction and development as a higher objective toward serving the government and the society.