

Joint initiative to protect juveniles against exploitation, neglect



Chapuisat Daccache and Dr. Alexis Loeber, head of the EU delegation, during the launch.

BEIRUT: Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Juveniles in Lebanon, a toolkit for protecting children against violence, exploitation and neglect was launched Wednesday.

"These procedures are the first step toward the unification of methods and tools, to be used in child protection case management," Social Affairs Minister Rashid Derbas said during the ceremony at Université Saint Joseph Campus of Human Sciences, Damascus Road.

"Case management in the field of child protection is highly important, especially in light of the current crisis in Lebanon and with the intensification of the Syrian displacement."

The operating procedures are the fruit of a joint initiative of the Social Affairs Ministry, USJ, the European Union and UNICEF.

Lebanon's children have long been plagued by the absence of operating procedures that govern juvenile protection in Lebanon. The new procedures recommend legal provisions to be implemented either through the amendment of current laws or the enactment of new legislation.

The recommendations also provide standardized assessments, evaluation protocols, case management methodologies and training courses.

"This event is the culmination of an immense work and training addressed to 508 professionals in a field that requires a high level of technical expertise," USJ rector Rev. Salim Daccache said. "There is a civic vision and a sustainable work that could become a social and organizational model for the future."

Standard Operating Procedures for the Protection of Juveniles in

Lebanon's secondary goal is to assist the ministries involved in providing protection to juveniles. It will also monitor the laws that are being implemented. The measures provide a more thorough analysis of child protection issues in Lebanon and boosts their quality.

"Today we have a road map of findings and recommendations, identifying challenges but also opportunities. The standard operating procedures we are launching are the outcome of UNICEF's strong commitment to put these findings into practice," UNICEF's representative in Lebanon Tanya Chapuisat said. "This is a reform of the measures in place, a promise to ourselves and all the children out there that from today, the safety net is more tightly knit, so we can better safeguard children." – *The Daily Star*

The Daily Star/ Ramzi Haider