

# Listen to us

## Poll shows the need to carve out a new reform policy

While Lebanon seemed to be tackling the question of administrative reform more eagerly since Paris II, as different sides argued over the pros and cons of privatization and what kind of reforms need to take place, the endeavor has been rather futile. This is demonstrated by the 2004 budget, which does not include any structural, economic or political reform plans.

### A host of perspectives

According to 20.6% of respondents to a poll conducted by *Information International*, real reform should take place through the application of the Illicit Wealth Law, as shown in [Graph 1](#). Another 20.2% suggested eliminating the confessional system of politics, while 17.9% believed adopting a merit-based approach when appointing officials is the best solution. The dismissal of corrupt employees was proposed by 16.7%, restructuring the public sector was suggested by 12% and putting an end to political interference in the different administrations was recommended by 11.4%.

President Lahoud's inauguration speech was unique in comparison to other presidencies because it focused on curbing corruption, upholding the rule of law and applying accountability. While the campaign has been faced with obstacles and criticism, there has been an attempt to revive it. However, a little over half of respondents considered the government's latest efforts toward administrative reform to be a failure (see [Graph 2](#)). This is compared with only 9% who considered them a success and 34.7% who felt it was a good start.

### Presidential endeavors

On announcing his renewed campaign to fight corruption and introduce much-needed reforms, President Lahoud paid some unscheduled visits to monitor the work of a number of administrations and projects, including the Ministry of Electricity, National Social Security Fund and road projects.

Those visits were considered helpful, but insufficient in revitalizing and strengthening the work of those bodies in the long run, according to 36.5% of respondents. In contrast, 28.7% of those polled felt the visits were effective, compared with 25.7% who stated that they were useless (see [Graph 3](#)).

### Sample

Conducted between 25-29 September 2003, this poll was based on a random sample of 600 Greater Beirut residents, with a gender distribution of 72% males and 28% females. The distribution of respondents by age was as follows:

- 18-24: 26.6%
- 25-34: 29%
- 35-44: 21.6%
- 45-54: 12.1%
- Over 55: 10.7%

