

# Minutes of Meeting Inter-Sector Coordination Group Meeting

Meeting Location	Hybrid: MS Teams & UNHCR 8 <sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room	Meeting Date	7 Feb 2025	
Chairperson(s)	Dr. Ola Boutros, LRP General Supervisor (MoSA)	Meeting	10:00 a.m.	
	Kristin Arthur, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR)	Time	12:00 p.m.	
	Elena Ferrari, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP)			
	Rawad El Zir, Head of Coordination (OCHA)			
Minutes	Jana Nasr, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant	Meeting	2.00 hrs.	
Prepared by	(UNHCR) Duration 2.00 nrs.			
<b>Participants</b>	Annex 1			
Agenda	1. Opening Remarks			
	2. LRP Update			
	LRP 2025 Overview			
	• <u>Timeline</u>			
	3. Update on US Funding			
	4. HSM Presentation and Discussion on Extension Proposal			
	5. <u>AoB</u>			
	Update on Planning and Preparedness			
	Reporting Calendar			
	Calendar of Deadlines for Sector Coordinators			

# 1. Opening Remarks

Dr. Ola Boutros, LRP General Supervisor (MoSA) Kristin Arthur, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR) Elena Ferrari, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP) Rawad El Zir, Head of Coordination (OCHA)

In their opening remarks, the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) Co-Chairs welcomed the participants and presented the agenda.

Dr. Ola expressed gratitude for the continued support to vulnerable populations, highlighting the successful collaboration between partners and the Ministry of Social Affairs on the social safety net deduplication exercise. She acknowledged Lebanon's current challenges, including political uncertainty, security incidents, and the ongoing crisis in the south, which has led to widespread destruction of infrastructure and essential services. She emphasized the importance of stability at the Lebanese-Syrian border and the need to assess the vulnerabilities of newly arrived individuals under the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP). Dr. Boutros also noted concerns over the suspension of US funding and its potential impact. Despite these challenges, she urged all stakeholders to prioritize and implement in a principled way to ensure that no one is left behind.

# 2. LRP Update

#### **LRP 2025 Overview**

Elena Ferrari, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP)

Elena Ferrari provided an overview of the 2025 LRP:

- The 2024-2025 LRP was endorsed by the Steering Committee in mid-October 2024.
- The current planning figures include:
  - o **Total population:** 5.7 million
  - o **People in need:** 4.1 million



- People targeted: 3.6 million
  - 1.7 million vulnerable Lebanese
  - 1.5 million displaced Syrians
  - 200,000 Palestine Refugees in Lebanon
  - 23,026 Palestinian Refugees from Syria
  - 175,947 migrants
- o Population targets per sector are listed on slide 12 of the presentation <a href="here">here</a>.
- The total sector funding request for 2025 is \$3.16 billion and the total Partner appeal is \$2.99 billion as of 7 February 2025.
- 164 partners have expressed interest under the 2025 LRP Partner Appeal, out of which 14 are Un Agencies, 89 National NGOs, and 61 International NGOs.
- Capacity assessment for new appealing partners is ongoing, and is expected to be completed by Monday, 10 February 2025.

#### **Timeline**

Elena Ferrari, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP)

Elena presented a timeline of ongoing and upcoming activities under the LRP. Please refer to slide 14 <u>here</u> to view the timeline.

#### **Action Point:**

- 1. Inter-Sector to update/correct populations targets table in the presentation.
- 2. Inter-Sector to finalize and share Q4 Funding Update once verification is complete.

# 3. Update on US Funding

Rawad El Zir, Head of Coordination (OCHA)

Rawad El Zir provided an update on the recent suspension of US funding and its expected impact on humanitarian operations in Lebanon:

- During the HCT meeting, a quick impact analysis was initiated to evaluate the consequences of the US funding suspension.
- UN agencies conducted internal reviews of existing funding trends and relied on data from the Lebanon Aid Tracking System (LAT).
- Despite efforts to ensure data accuracy, some funding discrepancies were identified between what organizations had reported and what donors confirmed as disbursed.
- A rapid survey was circulated among partners to obtain direct feedback on how their operations would be impacted.

#### Sarah Choong, Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA)

Sarah Choong presented preliminary findings and detailed analysis of the anticipated impact of the US funding freeze on different sectors. She emphasized that the figures were preliminary and subject to further verification.

- Preliminary Findings on US Contributions (2024 Data):
- The United States was the top humanitarian donor to Lebanon in 2024, contributing a total of \$293 million in 2024, which represented 22% of total humanitarian funding received in the country (and an additional \$65 million committed but yet to be reported to LAT).
- \$231.3 million is the total amount funded by the US in 2024 towards the LRP (20% of total LRP funding).



- \$64.2 million is the total amount funded by the US in 2024 towards the FA. (26% of total Flash Appeal funding).
- The WASH, Education, Food Security, and Health sectors were identified as the most affected by the funding freeze.
- Findings are available in the form of graphs on slides 16 to 21 here.
- Impact on sectors:

#### o WaSH:

- 170,000 Syrian refugees living in informal settlements will no longer receive WaSH services.
- 85% of WaSH services for refugees are funded by the US, making this sector particularly vulnerable.
- Increased risk of cholera outbreaks and other waterborne diseases.
- Heightened tensions between refugee and host communities due to competition for limited water resources.
- Deterioration of hygiene conditions, leading to increased health risks.

## Food Security and Agriculture:

- Discontinuity of assistance for 758,523 out of 1,943,055 if funding is not secured, This includes 570,000 Syrians, 170,000 Lebanese,
- 18,523 Palestinians and other population groups.
- \$89 million in funding impacted.
- 5 partners received stop-work orders (SWOs): 2 UN and 3 NNGOs.

#### Education:

- 400,000 children are at risk of losing access to education.
- Five out of seven education partners have already received stop-work orders, affecting essential programs.
- Programs impacted: Retention support to prevent school dropouts;
   Cash for education assistance for vulnerable Lebanese families; Nonformal education (NFE) initiatives targeting Syrian refugee children;
   Integrated education services for marginalized populations.

#### o Health:

Reduced access to chronic medication, primary healthcare services, hospital care, and life-saving emergency response mechanisms, Mental health and psychosocial support services (MHPSS), child and maternal health services and disease outbreak response capacity (e.g., cholera containment efforts).

# o Protection:

- The funding freeze will severely impact protection services, particularly for:
- Gender-based violence (GBV) response and case management.
- Child protection interventions.
- Legal aid and protection monitoring.
- Targeted assistance for persons with disabilities and older persons.
- Emergency cash assistance for vulnerable individuals.

#### o Basic Assistance:

- Multipurpose cash programs have been temporarily suspended.
- Tens of thousands of families are now left without essential support for food, rent, and other necessities.
- The suspension also affects the ability of aid agencies to scale up support in response to new displacement.

#### o Shelter:



- 4,000 individuals will not receive cash-for-rent support, putting them at immediate risk of eviction.
- 2,000 people will remain in substandard shelter conditions due to the lack of rehabilitation assistance.
- 8,000 individuals affected by recent hostilities will not receive support to repair their damaged homes.
- Social Stability and Livelihoods:
  - At least 12 mine action teams have ceased operations, increasing the risk of accidents and fatalities.
  - Reduction in livelihood programs, impacting businesses and employment generation efforts.
- Mitigation measures include securing diverse funding sources, promoting cofinancing with the Government of Lebanon, and prioritizing resources geographically for critical services. Strategies focus on enhancing multisectoral collaboration, increasing localization, optimizing cash assistance, improving service mapping, and implementing a unified assessment approach to reduce costs and strengthen response effectiveness.
- Sector-specific mitigation measures are listed on slide 26 <u>here</u>.
- The key asks focus on advocating with the US government at a high level regarding aid suspension, diversifying funding sources through donor engagement, and increasing Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) / Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) allocations. Additional priorities include enhancing flexibility in existing funding, facilitating donor engagement through the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and ensuring internal agreement on common messages for communication with authorities.

#### Key discussion points:

- Accuracy of Data & Harmonization of Impact Assessment:
  - Several participants raised concerns about how funding impact was calculated (e.g., using appealed funding vs. actual received funding).
  - A proposal was made to establish a standardized approach for measuring the number of affected individuals and financial shortfalls.
- Donor Engagement Strategy:
  - Several donors (Canada, Netherlands, Switzerland, and ECHO) have requested detailed impact data before considering additional support.
  - Qatar has expressed interest in providing assistance for WASH and Basic Assistance.
- Advocacy and Government Engagement:
  - Some Lebanese MPs have already called for a reduction of aid to Syrian refugees.
  - A strategic communication plan is needed to highlight how funding cuts also affect vulnerable Lebanese to counter political narratives.

#### **Action Point:**

- 3. Inter-Sector to update the US Funding excel sheet based on ISCG feedback and share it for inputs by Wednesday at the latest.
- 4. OCHA to confirm Planning and Preparedness scenario post-cessation of hostilities.



# 4. HSM Presentation and Discussion on Extension Proposal

Clara Lefrançois, Country Representative (REACH)

Clara Lefrancois presented on Humanitarian Situation Monitoring:

- The HSM is a data collection initiative designed to monitor humanitarian conditions in conflict-affected areas and assess the accessibility of essential services.
- Focus Areas: Conflict-affected communities; Access barriers to basic services; Infrastructure damage and service disruptions; Identifying urgent humanitarian needs.
- Methodology:
  - Data is collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) rather than household surveys, as many of the areas assessed are hard-to-reach zones.
  - The questionnaire is developed in consultation with different sectors and remains unchanged across rounds to allow for trend analysis and comparability over time.
  - Findings from each round are used to inform operational decisions, advocacy efforts, and resource allocation within the humanitarian response framework.
- There is a proposal to conduct a third round of HSM in February 2025.
  - Proposed Areas for Assessment: Baalbek, Bekaa, and Dahyeh (Beirut suburbs).
  - Rationale for Selecting These Areas:
    - Baalbek and Bekaa: Continued displacement from Syria is increasing pressure on local resources. In addition, food insecurity and lack of essential services remain key concerns.
    - Dahyeh (Beirut suburbs): One of the most heavily affected areas. No public assessments have been conducted thus far, leaving critical information gaps. The difficulties in household data collection necessitate reliance on KIIs.

## Marta Piekarczyk, Research Manager (REACH)

Marta Piekarczyk, presented the key results from the first and second rounds of data collection:

- Round 1 (November 2024): Assessed humanitarian conditions in Baalbek-Hermel and Bekaa Governorates before the ceasefire.
- Round 2 (December 2024): Expanded coverage to include South Lebanon and Nabatieh, in addition to Baalbek-Hermel and Bekaa.
- Key findings from Round 1:
  - Severe Disruptions in Essential Services: Access to healthcare, water, shelter, and food security was critically impaired, particularly in conflictaffected areas.
  - 22 out of 29 cadasters faced difficulties accessing workplaces due to insecurity, and 15 cadasters had workplace closures.
  - In 12 cadasters, health facilities were either closed or had suspended critical services, including medication distribution, emergency care, and maternal health services mainly due to financial constraints.
  - o Top Priority Needs:
    - Food assistance (needed in 25 of 29 cadasters).
    - Cash assistance (critical in all 29 cadasters).
    - Health services, shelter rehabilitation, and heating support.
  - For more details on Round 1 findings, see slides 33 and 34 here.
- Key findings from Round 2:



- Security-related access improved, but financial barriers to healthcare and livelihoods became the main challenge.
- Rising medication costs made treatment unaffordable.
- 23 cadasters in Baalbek-Hermel and Bekaa reported ongoing health facility closures.
- Reduced demand for labor in 29 cadasters in the South and Nabatieh increased unemployment.
- South and Nabatieh suffered extensive destruction, with five cadasters nearly fully damaged and in need of major reconstruction.
- Minimal damage was reported in Baalbek-Hermel and Bekaa, but service disruptions persisted.
- Top Priority Needs:
  - Cash assistance remained the most critical need across all regions.
  - Shelter support was essential for displaced populations.
  - Food assistance was in high demand, particularly for staple items like rice, cooking oil, and meat.
- For more details on Round 2 findings, see slides 35 to 38 here.

## Key discussion points:

- Limited Utilization of Previous HSM Data:
  - While the findings were interesting and useful for advocacy, most sectors had not directly used the data in programming.
  - Several sector coordinators confirmed that their response plans did not rely on HSM data but were informed more by direct partner reporting.
- Timeliness of HSM Findings:
  - Some participants expressed concerns about the time lag between data collection and report dissemination.
  - By the time results were available, partners had already obtained similar information from field operations.
  - Health sector representatives emphasized that real-time data was more valuable than retrospective assessments.
- Overlap with Other Assessment Tools:
  - The Food Security sector relies primarily on IPC data and has not incorporated HSM results in decision-making.
  - Health sector representatives questioned the added value of another assessment when partners already report through other mechanisms.
- Funding Considerations for Round 3:
  - LHF has partially funded HSM but requires justification for continued financial support.
  - LHF representatives sought clarification on whether Round 3 was necessary given the limited use of previous rounds and whether alternative methodologies (e.g., direct partner reporting) could achieve the same objectives.

#### **Action Point:**

5. ISCG to share any further feedback on HSM with ISCG Co-Chairs by COB today; ISCG Co-Chairs will share any further feedback received on the proposed extension with the LHF.



#### 5. AoB

## **Update on Planning and Preparedness**

Kristin Arthur, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR)

Kirstin Arthur provided an update planning and preparedness:

- Post Cessation of hostilities:
  - A meeting was held with the ISCG at the national level on 17 January regarding the planning scenario.
  - The draft preparedness plan is being reviewed by Sectors and the ISCG aims to finalize inputs at the national level and then will be shared at sub-national level for review/inputs as well.
- Influx from Syria to Lebanon:
  - A meeting was held with the ISCG at the national level on 31 January regarding the planning scenario.
  - A draft preparedness plan is in development and will be shared with sectors at national level for their review/inputs before sharing with sub-national ISCG.

## **Reporting Calendar**

Kristin Arthur, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR)

Kirstin presented the reporting calendar highlighting the following:

- ActivityInfo
- CS reporting
- LRP Reporting
- Flash Appeal Reporting
- Flash update Inputs
- LAT Inputs
- Reached Figure
- The LRP 2025 Reporting Calendar for 2025 is available here.

#### **Calendar of Deadlines to Sectors**

Kristin Arthur, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR)

Kirstin displayed the current calendar of deadlines:

noting that it will be reviewed and updated by the Inter-Sector Co-Chairs:

- The calendar will be reviewed and updated by the Inter-Sector Co-Chairs.
- Sectors who might need additional time based on their caseload may contact the Inter-Sector on a case-by-case basis.
- The calendar is available on slide 46 here.

## **Action Point:**

- 6. Inter-Sector to share updated deadlines timeline next week.
- 7. Inter-Sector to draft and send a generic email to Partners reminding them of the importance of coordinating among the Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM), Governors, and Mayors before conducting activities or implementing programmes.
- 8. Inter-Sector Co-Chairs to follow-up on a proposed date for the Donors' Group Meeting.



# **Annex 1**

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