**National Livelihoods Working Group Meeting**

 Minutes – 19 February 2016 – Beirut

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| **Meeting** |
| **Name** | Livelihoods Working Group meeting | **Meeting Date** | 19/02/16 |
| **Meeting Location** | UNDP-6th floor | **Meeting Time** | 10.00 |
| **Co-Chair person** | Bastien Revel –UNDPRafif Berro – MoET | **Meeting Duration** | 2 hours |
| **Minutes Prepared by** | Noemie Lanternier – UNDP |  |  |
| **Main discussion points****Participants:**  |   1. Welcome and introduction
2. General update
3. Field Update
4. Activity info reporting and training
5. Sector Workplan and Structure.
6. Presentation of IRC SME Market Overview for Lebanon
7. Presentation of the Ministry of Economy and Trade SME strategy and discussion on linkages with the sector’s work.

MoSA, MoET, UNDP, World Vision, Social Impact, Oxfam, SCI, UNHCR, Al Majmoua, ILO, IRC, DRC, Acted, Mercy Corps, Besme, Balamand University, JICA, RI, ESCWA, Don Bosco Technique (DBT), CESVI, DFID, IOM, Makhzoumi, Recycle Beirut, VNGI. |

**Summary of discussions and action points**

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| **1**  | **Welcome and introduction** |
|  | The chair welcomed the participants on behalf of the co-leads.  |
| **2** | **General update** |
|  | **London conference updates (see Lebanon’s statement of intent) :** The London Conference has been a significant success, with pledges amounting to US$ 5.9 bn for 2016 and US$ 5.4 bn for 2017-2020, the highest amount ever mobilized in response to one crisis. The Government of Lebanon presented at the conference a Statement of Intent, which outlines key priority areas of support in the fields of education and economic opportunities to mitigate the impact of the Syrian crisis in Lebanon.The government of Lebanon plans on appointing a high-level focal point and on creating a national joint technical committee composed of government and UN representatives to ensure the satisfactory implementation of the post-London scheme.Despite the fact that the breakdown of pledges has not yet been made, the event should have positive outcomes for the livelihoods sector and could constitute a game-changer.**Ministry of Labor decision** The Ministry of Labor recently issued a decision presenting the different types of jobs accessible to Lebanese only. Three major changes were highlighted :* + Firstly, under article 2 (“The right to practice the following business, professions, crafts and jobs shall be confined solely to Lebanese citizens”), a specific mention referring to business has been included;
	+ Secondly, under article 3, Syrians are allowed to work in the fields of agriculture, construction and environment (previously, it was agriculture, construction and cleaning);
	+ Finally, under article 3 again, a Lebanese employer is allowed to recruit a foreigner as long as he/she can provide evidence that he/she failed to find a Lebanese for this position after 3 months of searching. It is the first time that such a proof is requested in the decision itself (previously it was only requested during the application process to obtain a work permit).
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| **3** | **Field update**  |
|  | See presentation **Bekaa:**Field coordinator : Rania HammoudLH WG meetings : 2nd Tuesday, 10 am - UNDP Chtaura Key partners and types of interventions in 2016:IOM is coleading the LH working group meetings in Bekaa.The organization supports MSMEs and job creation in Central Bekaa along with DRC which is also involved in the enhancement of value chains in North Bekaa.In parallel, value chains are being upgraded and strengthened through a series of projects implemented by B&Z, IRC and STC in Central Bekaa, ACF in North Bekaa and STC in West Bekaa.UNDP is active in Central, West and North Bekaa and currently implements 6 projects under outputs 1.1 and 1.3 supporting public markets, community kitchens and cooperatives.Overall, we notice a strong concentration of activities in Central Bekaa with many partners involved. Gaps/ways forward:There are currently no livelihoods projects reported in Rashaya – while there are less refugees in this qaza, this remains an important gap that should be addressed by sector partners. **Beirut & Mount Lebanon:**Field coordinator : William BarakatLH WG meetings : 2nd Thursday 10 am - UNDP Beirut•The BML meetings are co-led by MoSA and UNDP and are usually held at UNDP Country Office. However, the next meetings will be organized at partners’ offices / projects centers. Makhzoumi Foundation proposed to host the upcoming WG meeting at their training site at Mazraa in Beirut to enable partners to better grasp their activities in the field.•Last month, the BML meeting focused on Livelihoods topics but the next WG meeting will cover Social Stability matters and will include a presentation on the comparison between partners’ achievements vs. sectors targets in 2015. In addition, MoSA will present an overview of its SDCs services and contacts within BML.Key partners and types of interventions in 2016:•IRC (in partnership with Al Majmoua as we are their implementing partner for the Business management training, vocational training and support of MSMEs) and NEF: Business training, support of MSMEs, public work in Aley and Metn. •UNDP: is working on support to MSMEs, youth employability, support to local entrepreneurs in the establishment of start-ups in BSS and Mount Lebanon. •Main livelihoods activities in BML are vocational trainings including mainly: Makhzoumi, CLMC, Intersos, UNHCR, UNRWA, IRC, Amel, Save the Children, ACA, NEF, YFD, Al Majmoua.*Vocational trainings partners by areas:** Iqleem El Kharroub: ACA, UNRWA
* BSS: Amel, Save the Children
* Metn: Intersos, IRC, NEF, Save the Children, UNHCR
* Aley: Intersos, IRC
* Beirut: UNHCR, YFD

Gaps/Ways forward : actions will be taken to enhance the WG productivity through the sharing of assessments and projects ideas before design (to avoid duplication and open the room for joint implementation and collaboration) and the provision of information on governmental strategies to ensure that the projects of partners are aligned with national strategies.*Tables/Maps compilation*•Vocational Trainings table to be shared by the end of February.•3W 2016 compilation of Livelihood and Social Stability activities for internal usage (the table could however be shared upon request).**North:**Field coordinator : Lama SrourLH WG meetings : 3rd Wednesday 1pm, rotating between Tripoli, Halba and Qoubbayat Key partners and types of interventions in 2016:The LH working group is co-led by DRC. Most of the activities currently ongoing started in 2015 but new ones have begun since January 2016. Activities around workforce employability remain the main ones with the support of IRC, DRC, STC, B&Z, Al Majmoua, Mercy Corps and UNDP, with four more partners engaged in public works projects. Partners such as IRC, DRC, Mercy Corps and UNIDO implement additional activities to support MSMEs and job creation (including through the provision of in-kind and cash grants, support to public markets (notably in Halba) and the development of partnership projects).In parallel, value chained are being strengthened and upgraded with the support of STC, ACTED and ILO.Gaps/Ways forward:The major gap identified is in Akkar were a rather small number of partners intervene. Agricultural livelihoods in particular should benefit from stronger support given its potential for the economic development of the region. MoA will present their work and strategy in the area in the next LH working group meeting.Template focusing on skills training activities is being prepared by UNDP field coordinator and the 3W map is being finalized in close coordination with partners.**South :**Field coordinator : Iman KhatibLH WG meetings : last Wednesday of each month 10 am - UNDP Tyr Key partners and types of interventions in 2016:There is not a large number of partners in the South, especially compared to last year.The main partners include UNIFIL, UNHCR, MOSA, ACF, IOM, Caritas, UNDP, Sheild, IRC, DPNA, YNCA, WFP, AVSI, Solidar Suisse. In addition to MOSA and UNDP, AVSI is co-leading on livelihoods in the South. The only organizations currently implementing LH activities in the South are IOM, Sheild and UNDP.IOM supports job creation through investment in infrastructures and assets. Sheild implements activities related to capacity building, job creation and income generation.UNDP implements projects related to community kitchens in different locations, is involved in the construction and setting up of a vegetable and of a fish market in Nabatiyeh and supports MSMEs and job creation. Gaps / Ways forward :There is a rather large number of refugees in the South and very few partners to support them. It would be interesting for the organizations involved in the LH sector to increase their presence in this region in order to better address the needs of vulnerable communities.The sector coordinator underlined the importance for partners to regularly attend the field working group meetings in their areas of intervention for information-sharing and coordination purposes. |
| **4** | **Activity info reporting and training** |
|  | * Activity info trainings were completed in the four field locations.
* To date, ACTED, ARCS, Intersos, IOM, IRC, Makhzoumi, Mercy Corps, Near East Foundation, PU‐AMI, Save the Children, Al Majmoua and UNDP reported on their activities for the month of January 2016.

All the sectors dashboards will be prepared on a quarterly basis this year at the request of the inter-agency.The Livelihoods and Social Stability IM focal point, Said Abou Kharroub will leave UNDP on February 19, 2016. A new Information Management officer will be recruited in the coming days. |
| **5.**  | **Sector workplan and structure** |
|  | A document presenting the sector workplan and structure for 2016 was circulated during the meeting which will be shared by email with the WG members. Partners were invited to make suggestions and send their inputs to the sector coordinator as soon as possible.

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| **Livelihoods sector support to SMEs** (see presentation) |
| * Business management training
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| * Access to financial services
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| * Cash & in kind grants
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| * Technology transfer
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| * Sector Target: 1,800 – including micro-entreprises and cooperatives/Appeal: 20mUSD
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| * Partners cumulative targets: over 2,000 MSMEs supported, 26mUSD grants provided
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| * Partners: ACF, ACTED, Action Aid, Al Majmoua, Besme, CARE, CEVSI, CONCERN, DRC, ILO, IRC, Makhzoumi, Mercy Corps, NPA, OXFAM, PU-AMI, RI, SCI, UNDP, UNIDO.
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| **6.**  | **Presentation of IRC SME Market Overview for Lebanon** |
|  | See presentationA market overview focusing on small and medium enterprises in Beirut and Mount Lebanon was published in February 2016 by IRC.Overall, two different assessments were conducted in Akkar and Mount Lebanon whose results were shared during the presentation. The following key findings were shared with the participants:* The lack of consensus on MSMEs’ needs;
* The importance of supporting MSMEs on business planning, customer service, sales & marketing and financial management;
* The necessity to improve and contextualize business trainings;
* The importance of providing follow up support to entrepreneurs ;
* The lack of centralized information and access (which gives a low visibility of the business market and significantly limits procurement opportunities).

Recommendations highlighted the importance of:* sharing valuable information with MSMEs;
* creating a centralized & accessible online resource focusing on training opportunities, financing options, etc.
* building businesses capacities;
* developing MSMEs support programs (to facilitate mentorship and access to finance/ capital…).

Participants mentioned the fact that it would be interesting to develop a gender-based approach when supporting the development of MSMEs. As a result, IRC was encouraged to disaggregate beneficiaries by gender in future surveys to provide more information on the specific needs and challenges faced by women entrepreneurs.Similarly, in order to better grasp the kind of support which should be specifically provided to businesses depending on their size, participants suggested to separate in future surveys micro-enterprises and SMEs. It would be useful for partners to develop a list of possible mentors and trainers who could be mobilized in future coaching or training activities for capitalization purposes. |
| **7.**  | **Presentation of the Ministry of Economy and Trade SME strategy and discussion on linkages with the sector’s work**  |
|  | See presentationThe presentation made by MoET focused on the following key elements :•SMEs are the engine of growth of economies. In Lebanon, they represent more than 90% of registered firms, employ 50% of working population, yet contribute only 27% of total revenues.•SMEs are mainly located in Mount Lebanon (55%) and Beirut (23%), and operate mostly in Trading (53%), Real estate (13%) and Manufacturing (12%).•In the past two decades, Lebanon witnessed several waves of interest in supporting private sector including entrepreneurs and SMEs. The MSMEs were mostly supported by government in early 90s, international organizations in the early 2000s and after 2005, more by NGOs and private financers.•Particularly in the past few years, Lebanon has seen the advent of several public and private sector support initiatives.•In sum, more than 150 initiatives have spurred.•Despite all these efforts, SMEs are still facing challenges, and require more support given their potential. Listed challenges are notably related to capabilities, capital, market structure, legal & regulatory framework, poor market research and untapped innovation potential.•Supporting this sector is urgent and key to help Lebanon overcome its challenges, most importantly, job creation. Major issues remain among which: unemployment, loss in national competitiveness, the impact of the Syrian crisis and a substantial brain drain (which creates a middle management gap all over the country).•To overcome these challenges, MOET launched the “Lebanon SME Strategy: a Roadmap for 2020”. This strategy has a clear vision, mission and objectives. These goals rest on six strategic thrusts that are effectively the pillars of the Strategy: 1) evolving business leaders, 2) facilitating the right founding, 3) improving access to market, 4) enhancing capabilities and innovation capacities, 5) developing a conductive business environment 6) national infrastructure. •41 Initiatives have been identified and prioritized to be implemented in 3 waves which are listed in detail in the PPT presentation.•To drive the implementation of the Lebanon SME Strategy and to enhance coordination among all stakeholders, a Public Private SME Board chaired by the Prime Minister is being established.•The SME Board will provide strategic direction and guidance, its Secretariat will be in charge of management and follow up, and the Champion/Working Groups will detail, design and implement the initiatives.The SME strategy focuses on important sectors in which partners could provide support. They are highlighted in red in the PPT presentation to show the specific link with the LCRP. MoET representative encouraged sector partners to implement activities in a series of key sectors with a view to contribute to:* the development of mentorship networks for SMEs;
* the establishment of Women-Friendly Business Environment;
* the identification and development of angel investors networks;
* the enhancement of SMEs products and services;
* Etc.

MoET has not yet established specific contacts with committees or professional syndicates (of doctors, engineers...) but could do so in the future to better target their needs in the implementation of its strategies.The Ministry will share action plans and relevant updates with partners and invited them to support its strategies related to job creation and business development.For any additional information regarding the presentation or the SME strategy, please contact Ms. El Khoury. |
| **8.** | **AOB** |
|  | The sector coordinator underlined the importance of the assessments registry (accessible on the Inter-agency sharing portal or through this link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1iHQ4efiS0ZphniRvg551I7ly9MvT9fP2N6pQRs6NMhA/viewform?c=0&w=1> ). He highlighted that for the moment very few assessments had been registered online and invited partners to use this important information sharing tool. |

**Participants list**

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| **Name** | **Organization** |
| Madhumitha Madhavan | ACTED |
| Alia Farhat | Al Majmoua |
| Bashayer Madi | Balamand University |
| Fatma Atay | Besme |
| Chiara Lombardi | CESVI |
| Frances Ailey | DFID |
| Chadi Ibrahim | Don Bosco Technique |
| Sofia Palli | ESCWA |
| Annabella Skof | ILO |
| Joumana KARAME | ILO |
| Meghrie Djeridian | IOM |
| Roy Abijaoude | DRC |
| Naim Frewat | IRC |
| Myriam Rabbath | JICA |
| Alia Sabra | Makhzoumi Foundation |
| Assaad Machalani | Mercy Corps |
| Zeina El Khoury | MOET |
| Rafif Berro  | MOET |
| Rita Ata | MOSA |
| Rachel Eichholz | Oxfam |
| Silvana Grispino | Oxfam |
| Hiam Mardini | RI |
| Alexander McHugh | Recycle Beirut |
| Marianne Vik  | Search for Common Ground |
| Wassim Katerji | Social Impact |
| Najiva Andraos | Social Impact |
| Iman Khatib | UNDP |
| Michelle Krogh | UNDP |
| William Barakat | UNDP |
| Nathalie Wehbe | UNDP |
| Nancy Maroun | UNDP |
| Rania Hammoud | UNDP |
| Lama Srour | UNDP |
| Gloria de Marchi | UNHCR |
| Mirvat Bakkour | VNGI |
| Majdi Dagher | World Vision |