



Minutes of Meeting Joint Technical Task Force (JTF)

Meeting Location	Radisson Blu Hotel – Verdun Ballroom Beirut, Lebanon	Meeting Date	11 October 2023
Chairperson(s)	Dr. Ola Boutros, LCRP General Supervisor (Ministry of Social Affairs - MoSA) Tracey Maulfair, Deputy Representative - Protection (UNHCR) Elina Silen, Chief Technical Advisor - Crisis Response (UNDP)	Meeting Time	13:00 p.m. 15:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared by	Jana Nasr, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)	Meeting Duration	2.00 hrs.
Participants	Annex 1		
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Opening RemarksLCRP 2023: Brief Update<ul style="list-style-type: none">2023 Results and Operating ContextLCRP Cross-Sectoral Prioritization ProcessDiscussion: Insights on Elements to Safeguard within the 2024 Response2024 Response Planning<ul style="list-style-type: none">Introduction to the Lebanon Response PlanRegional Planning Steers: Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)Discussion: Recommendations for the 2024 Response Planning ProcessClosing Remarks		

1. Opening Remarks

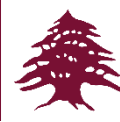
In their opening remarks the co-chairs of the Joint Technical Task Force (JTF) meeting welcomed the participants and highlighted the following points:

Dr. Ola Boutros, LCRP General Supervisor (MoSA)

- The collaborative approach to response planning, involving the Government of Lebanon (GoL), UN Agencies, International and National NGOs, donors, and partners, is essential to ensure that assistance effectively reaches the most vulnerable populations.
- The operational context in Lebanon is intricate and there are growing tensions between the host community and displaced Syrian population.
- The collective efforts of all partners in addressing the increasing needs and challenges spanning various sectors are highly appreciated.
- The limited resources available and the incapacity of public and local institutions to respond adequately to successive crises amidst a political deadlock and evolving developments in the south needs to be considered.
- An effective response can achieve significant impact by strengthening coping mechanisms and providing support to all those in need without discrimination.
- Hope for the restoration of stability in the wider context of Lebanon and hope for the resolution of the root causes of the Syria crisis.

Ms. Tracey Maulfair, Deputy Representative - Protection (UNHCR)

- The importance of engagement and collaboration among all participants to ensure productive exchanges in the meeting.
- The current challenges continue to evolve, including the situation of the displaced community and the increasing economic instability.



- The widening gap between available funds and the growing needs, especially given the high demand for resources and funding constraints in the global context, is concerning.
- Significant accomplishments have been made under the LCRP despite the challenges and this is worth acknowledging.
- The continued dedication of partners to their work, particularly in delivering assistance to vulnerable individuals in Lebanon is valued and appreciated.
- Support to Lebanese has been sustained and increased under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) in 2023 in response to growing needs.
- Continued collaboration is key to addressing the developing challenges in the future.

Ms. Elina Silen, Chief Technical Advisor - Crisis Response (UNDP)

- The meeting agenda will be light, focusing on elements from an accountability perspective.
- In preparation for 2024, it is essential to have focused discussions on sectoral and cross-sectoral priorities, the new response framework, and recommendations for the planning process.
- Comprehensive information is provided in the handout titled '[Background Information for JTF](#)', and only a concise part will be covered during the presentation.
- A briefing will be provided on the outcomes of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) planning workshop which was held in mid-September in Amman, with consideration of both regional and local aspects, which bears significance in setting the trajectory for Lebanon's future.
- For 2024, the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP) will be introduced as a unified framework, providing essential direction for addressing the ongoing challenges.
- Active engagement in providing feedback and recommendations on the LRP are crucial for its development and are highly encouraged.

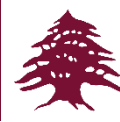
2. LCRP 2023: Brief Update

2023 Results and Operating Context

Ms. Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (Inter-Agency)

On 2023 results and the operating context, a presentation was made on the 2023 mid-year results and touch based on the operating context that has shaped partners' work this year. It was mentioned that:

- The funding situation improved in Q2 of 2023 and became more closely aligned with the figures from the previous year.
- The total amount available by Q2 2023 is 828 million USD (23 per cent of the needs-based appeal) for the LCRP. This included both funding received in 2023 and carry-over/multi-year funding contributions from 2022.
- There is a widening gap between the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB) and the household income due to Lebanese Pound devaluation.
- Food insecurity remains a pressing concern and the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) analysis is ongoing to assess the situation.
- The disability allowance programme has been enhanced in 2023 but sustained funding is required for inclusive national grants schemes.
- While admission to the malnutrition program is following an increasing trend, the funding outlook for the nutrition response is poor.
- Within the protection context, the number of Lebanese seeking assistance is increasing and concerns persist among the displaced Syrians due to raids, deportations, and restricted freedom of movement.



- In informal settlements, funding for essentials like shelter, water, and sanitation was insufficient in 2023, straining alternative approaches.
- As winter approaches, gaps in preparedness emerge at all levels, with concerns about wood-cutting activities and their environmental and communal impacts.
- Municipal services face issues such as solid waste management and strained inter-communal relations.
- There are concerns about the sustainability of water activities with the current funding situation.
- Public schools extended teaching days, with 30 extra days from summer schools benefiting 158,000 students, and they have now reopened in October.
- Over 8,000 Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) received support, with an emphasis on business support and financial services.
- Support for the Lebanese population continues in 2023 through public service provision and direct assistance. Examples are provided in the presentation [here](#) and the 'Support to Lebanese' dashboard available in [Arabic](#) and [English](#).

LCRP Cross-Sectoral Prioritization Process

Ms. Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (Inter-Agency)

For the LCRP cross-sectoral prioritization process, it was outlined that:

- Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG), informed by mid-year sector reviews, has identified elevated key cross-sectoral priorities for 2023 based on agreed criteria which cuts across all sectors.
- The criteria include the essential contribution of these priorities to the LCRP strategic goals, considering potential negative consequences if not supported, addressing protection threats and social tensions, and evaluating feasibility and cost-effectiveness.
- These priorities were also assessed at the Inter-Sector (IS) level to ensure coherence, completeness, and alignment with the LCRP objectives while working with reduced funding.
- A similar process will need to be put in place for the 2024 planning process as well.
- Priorities identified were linked to the LCRP's 6 impact statements available on slide 8 of the presentation [here](#).

Discussion: Considering the results, identified gaps, and the prevailing operating environment, a discussion was initiated regarding the key cross-sectoral priorities that should be safeguarded within the 2024 response.

Ms. Suzy Hoayek, representing the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW), highlighted that:

- It is important to prioritize addressing water-related challenges in the WASH sector and the need for improved services and recovery, with a focus on water quality, irrigation, and infrastructure support.
- Securing funding for water services in informal settlements (IS) is another priority needed to enable the delivery of essential services such as water trucking and desludging. This is necessary to prevent outbreaks, waterborne diseases, and pollution in IS.
- There needs to be more advocacy for a more holistic approach to services in informal settlements (ISs).
- The support of the European Union (EU) and other donors in operating wastewater treatment plants is acknowledged, yet additional funding, estimated at a few million dollars, is needed to bridge the gap in UNICEF's projections for the coming year and ensure that the provision of services in ISs will be maintained.



Colonel Lieutenant Tarek Mkanna, representing the Ministry of Interior & Municipalities (MoIM), mentioned that:

- It is important to explore mechanisms to mitigate additional funding in 2024 across all sectors, considering the complexity of the situation in Lebanon.
- Public institutions are relying on the support they receive from the European Union and other donors to provide for essential services.
- Understanding the broader context of the region, including how various countries' situations are interconnected, is significant to establish a cross-sectoral prioritization process at the country level and address the challenges in Lebanon effectively.
- It is necessary to prioritize social protection by monitoring and reducing tensions in areas of implementation.
- The urge for addressing both short term and long term solutions, focusing on the dignified return of displaced Syrians.

Ms. Sawsan Mortada, Representative of the Prime Minister Office highlighted that:

- Enhancing public transportation as a response to the crisis caused by rising fuel prices is an effective strategy to not only alleviate financial burdens on citizens but also to reduce environmental impact and promote sustainable mobility solutions.

Ms. Ghaida Nawam, representing the Lebanon Humanitarian & Development NGOs Forum (LHDF), highlighted that:

- The underfunding of the Shelter sector is concerning, and more funding is needed to continue supporting vulnerable populations in 2024.
- The provision of cash assistance for displaced individuals in South Lebanon is worth exploring.

Dr. Nadine Hilal, representing the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), noted that:

- Supporting the healthcare system and strengthening primary healthcare, especially hospitalization coverage due to increased demand, should be prioritized.
- The potential for enhancing Human Resources (HR) capacity is worth considering, not only in terms of healthcare providers but also professionals as the MoPH is currently operating with 30 per cent of its HR capacity.
- More resources and capacities need to be dedicated for digital transformation and emergency preparedness and response in the Health sector.
- Basic assistance, case management, and mental health support are essential components of our comprehensive approach to addressing the needs of vulnerable communities.

Ms. Farah El Khatib, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), emphasized that:

- The provision of multipurpose cash assistance has been positively impactful.
- It is important to support local actors in development projects.
- Challenges in Lebanon are exasperated due to the economic crisis and reduced funding.
- Support is needed from the international community to address long-term challenges.
- Proactive efforts to share data and strengthen collaboration between the GoL, UN agencies, and other actors are important for the overall effectiveness of the response.

Dr. Salem Darwich, representing the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), conveyed that:

- The government is committed to ensuring food security through comprehensive policies and initiatives.
- A strategy for increasing soft wheat production within the Food Security and Agriculture (FSA) sector is set in motion involving a multifaceted approach to guarantee food security.



- It is necessary to support farmers with seed distribution to optimize their crop yields.
- The potential funding constraints will have a substantial impact on the overall development of the FSA sector.
- Clarification is needed regarding the accessibility of plans intended to support the upcoming planning period, particularly concerning food security.
- Developing well refined plans for 2024 that encompass the comprehensive rural program helps ensure the efficient use of resources, monitoring of progress, and addressing of challenges.

Ms. Jana Nölke, representing Germany, pointed out that:

- It is important to prepare for the expected decrease in funds and consider the need for exit strategies.
- The prioritization of system strengthening and moving away from direct delivery, when possible, will help ensure more sustainable projects and services.

Mr. Bachir Ayoub, representing the Lebanon Humanitarian INGO Forum (LHIF), expressed that:

- It would be beneficial for ministries to share plans, gaps, priorities, and knowledge with partners on a regular basis to facilitate planning.
- Given the challenge to respond to immediate requests given the limited capacity, a grace period when implementing programs would significantly enhance effectiveness and adaptability.
- Collaboration among sectors and ministries supports implementing partners in their activities to ensure a more cohesive and impactful approach.
- It is valuable to examine certain areas of priorities in a cross-sectoral manner throughout the planning process.

3. 2024 Response Planning

Introduction to the Lebanon Response Plan

Natalie Sarafian, Head of Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO)

On the Lebanon Response Plan (LRP), the RCO introduced the new planned framework mentioning that:

- The LRP would be developed through a common needs/situation analysis and response planning process, to address the agreed strategic objectives. The draft strategic objectives of the LRP are available on slide 11 of the presentation [here](#).
- The LRP would seek to provide a pathway for a coherent, efficient, and accountable nexus response including both humanitarian and stabilization frameworks.
- Through streamlined governance and coordination arrangements, the LRP aims to bring together interventions under the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) and the Emergency Response Plan (ERP).
- Effective coordination structures and the consolidation of available data for analysis are essential for developing the LRP.
- The LRP would be on a tight deadline set for launching in January 2024. The draft timeline of the response is available on slide 12 of the presentation [here](#).

Regional Planning Steers: Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP)

Elina Silen, Chief Technical Advisor – Strategic Planning & Policy (UNDP)

Regarding the 3RP, it was highlighted that the 3RP is a regional integrated framework that fosters collaboration among diverse partners. Feedback was relayed from the 3RP regional planning workshop which took place from the 13th to the 14th of September in Amman, Jordan noting that:



- The 3RP is valued by partners and donors as a resource mobilization instrument.
- Participants in the 3RP suggested the need for adhering to planning deadlines while also maintaining adaptability and flexibility at the country level.
- It is crucial to maintain the Lebanon chapter of the regional response, especially given the tight planning for 2024 due to growing funding constraints.
- Strengthening donor partnerships at the global and country levels and understanding the funding landscape at the country level are key components.
- Need-based funding appeals should be retained, and prioritization should be incorporated into the planning process.
- In preparation for 2024, efforts will need to focus on strengthening donor partnerships considering an emphasis on diversifying funding sources, including non-traditional donors, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), and the private sector.
- The 3RP will remain in the Global Humanitarian Overview for 2024.
- It is important to focus on further aligning the country chapters with the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs) in future planning.

The MOIM subsequently requested for the readout of outcomes from the 3RP planning workshop to be shared.

Action Point:

Inter-Agency Coordination to share the 3RP Key Outcomes Document with the JTF Members.

Discussion: Based on the concept for the 'Lebanon Response Plan' and the 3RP planning steers, a discussion was initiated regarding the key elements to focus on within 2024 response planning in Lebanon.

Ms. Denise Dahrouj, representing the Ministry of Labor (MoL), emphasized that:

- It is essential to adhere by the Labor Law stating that anyone working in Lebanon (whether business owner or employee) must have a work permit; a residency permit is insufficient.
- Sharing circulars and rules and regulations, with guidance on how to adhere to them, contributes to ensuring clarity and transparency among partners.
- More light needs to be shed on the increasing rates of child labor in the country, raising the importance of child protection and urging its inclusion in the strategy for 2024.

Dr. Ola Boutros, representing the Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA), explained that:

- The LRP will be similar to the LCRP in terms of strategic objectives but will have a bit broader focus.
- Funding cuts are expected in 2024 and there is a push for more donor collaboration to look at funding gaps proactively in such a way that feeds into the prioritization exercise.

Ms. Tracey Maulfair, representing UNHCR, explained the following in response to an inquiry from Dr. Nadine Hilal on the population planning figures for 2024:

- Until the UNHCR estimated number of displaced Syrians in Lebanon changes, there is no expectation that the population planning figures in the 2024 response will change.

Ms. Sylvia Deepen, representing the Netherlands, expressed the Netherlands' commitment to Lebanon and mentioned that:

- On the need to focus on the prevailing issue of child labor, the Netherlands has launched a project with UNICEF to specifically tackle this.



- In addition to its work on employment, education, and the green development of the Lebanese economy, the Netherlands will also be working on agriculture and WASH in the coming four years.
- With the rising needs, it is insufficient to pull priorities if there are no necessary structural reforms from the Lebanese government. An urgent call for structural reforms is paramount to the sustainability of the projects being funded by donors.
- Achievements must be sufficiently monitored at impact level and not just at output level.
- A request to hold JTF meetings more regularly as planning for 2024 continues aiming to communicate more clearly around the gaps and needs and how the different actors can support.

Ms. Jana Nölke, representing Germany, expressed that:

- Reforms by the GoL are urgently called for, especially with the caretaker government and the strict timeline in place, as well as the anticipated funding cuts.

4. Closing Remarks

In the closing remarks, Ms. Elina Silen, on behalf of the JTF co-chairs, thanked the participants for their attendance and valuable contributions to the discussions that took place. She summarized key areas of priorities and gaps that were identified during the meeting, and highlighted the critical nature of collaboration among partners and donors in addressing these challenges effectively.



Annex 1

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