Inter-Agency Coordination Lebanon

Minutes of Meeting
Inter-Sector Working Group (ISWG)

Meeting Location	Remotely Via Zoom	**Meeting Date**	6 October 2023
Chairperson(s)	Dr. Ola Boutros, LCRP General Supervisor (Ministry of Social Affairs – MoSA) Camilla Jelbart Mosse, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNHCR – Inter-Agency) Michael Schaadt, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP)	**Meeting Time**	10:00 p.m. 12:00 p.m.
Minutes Prepared by	Jana Nasr, Senior Inter-Agency Coordination Assistant (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)	**Meeting Duration**	2.00 hrs.
Participants	Annex 1		
Agenda	1. Opening Remarks 2. Updates on Ein El Hilweh 3. Update from Education Sector on New School Year 4. 2024 "Lebanon Response Plan" 5. Winter Preparedness & Response 6. VASyR 2023 Preliminary Results 7. AoB: A. Gender and GBV – Trends and Mainstreaming Work B. Community-Based Protection Learning C. Q3 Reporting Timelines		

1. Opening Remarks

Dr. Ola Boutros, LCRP General Supervisor (MoSA)

In her opening remarks Dr. Boutros welcomed the participants and acknowledged Michael Schaadt's contribution and support to Inter-Agency Coordination before his departure.

2. Updates on Ein El Hilweh

Andrew Mcindoe, Associate Reporting Officer (UNRWA)

On the situation in Ein El Hilweh, Andrew provided a brief update on the ongoing coordination of the response to the emergency throughout the camp. He mentioned that:

- Ceasefire has been maintained for four weeks and a joint security force was deployed to ensure de-escalation in the Ein El Hilweh camp.
- The camp's collective shelters have seen a decrease in occupancy, with people returning to the camp (mostly coming from areas with extensive property damage).
- UNRWA has closed all designated emergency shelters, but some individuals are still sheltering in the camp. A security assessment is needed to resume operations.
- Discussions are ongoing about providing cash assistance to those with damaged shelters.
- Meetings are being organized with the Emergency Operations Cell (EOC) and sector representatives. Additionally, situation Reports (Sit-Reps) are being issued regularly.

3. Update form Education Sector on New School Year

Talin Sahakian, Education Sector Coordinator (UNICEF)

On the new school year, Talin provided an overview of the Education sector's outlook, emphasizing the importance of cross-sectoral implication. She explained that:

- The Education sector has been collaborating with UNRWA to explore approaches, activities, and funding possibilities. They are also addressing child protection concerns, considering the specific vulnerabilities of Palestinian children, and accommodating them in hosting schools.
- The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has extended the registration period for Lebanese students, which was previously set for 10 October 2023.
- Many schools are ready to open, and preparations are ongoing for the second shift, led by UNICEF and UNHCR.
- The Education sector is focusing on improving the learning outcomes of students, especially regarding reading proficiency. One of the main priorities is supporting retention and increasing the enrollment of out-of-school children.
- The Education sector is also working on improving targeting and collaborating with the child protection sector on child labor and other indicators.
- As of the latest information, funding for the education sector stands at around 35%, with hopes for increased funds as the school year begins.

2024 "Lebanon Response Plan"

Michael Schaadt, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator (UNDP)

Regarding the 2024 "Lebanon Response Plan" (LRP), Michael discussed the following:

- Given the need for a more unified and coherent response framework for 2024, the LRP aims to have one unified response plan developed through a common needs situation analysis, similar to the previous year, with common response planning processes.
- Governance and coordination mechanisms are important to reduce transaction costs and ensure efficiency. The ambition is to have a plan in place by 2024 to continue supporting the population.
- The LRP also aims to align with other frameworks, such as the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals, and the Regional Refugee and Response Plan (3RP). Strategies are still being finalized, but there is a consensus on the need for coherence.
- A draft timeline was provided, including workshops, sector strategies, and governance body endorsement before the LRP is finalized. It can be found on slide 10 of the presentation shared via email.
- Top-level discussions have taken place with various partners, but not all details have been circulated widely. Additionally, engagement with the government has involved discussions with the Prime Minister and line ministries.
- For UN agencies, the UNCT and HCT have been involved, but the details have been limited. A more extensive engagement plan is in the works to ensure a broader partnership.
- Donor engagement has taken place, and feedback has been considered. The engagement with partners will increase as the process moves forward.
- It is essential to respect strategic objectives and guarantee that refugees are supported by the international community.

Action Point: Inter-Agency meeting to be organized for promoting wider engagement with partners and circulating relevant information on the LRP among sectors for use within their sector working groups.

4. Winter Preparedness and Response

Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

On winter preparedness and response, Stephanie provided a recap of last year's challenges and actions along with recommendations for this year. She highlighted that:

- Lebanon experienced a relatively warmer and shorter winter in the previous year, where various assistance measures were taken, including the distribution of shelter kits, core relief items, and temporary relocation of individuals.
- Preparedness activities in the previous year included site improvements, support to municipalities, and winter cash assistance.
- Challenges from the previous year included funding shortfalls, damage to infrastructure (especially near riversides and informal settlements), protection space issues and social tensions, resource scarcity (fuel, electricity, means for winterization), and limited access to remote areas.
- The standard support package is categorized into the household and site levels. These packages included winter cash assistance, core relief items, food parcels, shelter kits, and more. The capacity to deliver them for 2024 needs to be assessed and any different assistance modalities should be identified.
- Standing recommendations on enhancing preparedness for the upcoming winter season include: prioritizing advanced preparation, conducting the Rapid Needs Assessment (RNA) tool and automating the reporting for Emergency Focal Points, updating the Geosplit and the contingency stock, distributing shelter kits, harmonizing post distribution monitoring regionally, and increasing support to municipalities.

Discussion: Winter Preparedness & Response

Considering the overview, a discussion was initiated among sector and subnational colleagues regarding the current level of preparedness, the anticipated challenges, the ability to respond to these challenges, and the possible recommendations to ensure an effective emergency response during the winter. The points discussed included:

- The Basic Assistance sector has finalized guidance notes for winter cash assistance for the 2023-2024. They have estimated the costs for winter baskets, advanced heating values, and in-kind assistance. They recognize the potential challenges related to funding shortages and will assess partner capacities during an upcoming working group meeting.
- The Shelter sector is closely monitoring the distribution of shelter kits and weatherproofing kits in informal settlements. They are also focused on site improvements, such as drainage and infrastructure in priority sites. They noted that they have encountered challenges in maintaining the schedule for weatherproofing kits and site improvements.
- The WASH sector is primarily focusing on preparedness actions in informal settlements. They are prepositioning de-watering pumps in areas prone to flooding and working on cleaning drainage channels. The sector is also updating contingency stock to ensure readiness for winter.
- The Protection sector is discussing and brainstorming preparedness actions with their partners. They are considering potential issues related to individual evictions during the winter season and how to respond, particularly in terms of providing cash or protection cash for complex interventions. The sector is also exploring measures to address increasing protection risks during winter.

Action Point: Based on the reflections and feedback provided in the sector-level discussion, Stephanie to develop an update on the outlook for the winter season including funding gaps for the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), donors, and response leadership.

5. VASyR 2023 Preliminary Results

Khider Ali, Information Management Officer (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

On the 2023 preliminary results from the Vulnerability Analysis of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon (VASyR), Khider provided an overview of the assessment, highlighting its importance in providing

insights into key areas across all the sectors and informing planning for 2024. A focal point from each sector briefly presented the currently available data and findings. The final VASyR results will be shared at a later stage.

6. AoB

Gender and GBV – Trends and Mainstreaming Work

Simona Pari, Inter-Agency Gender Specialist (UNDP)

On the Gender and GBV mainstreaming work, Simona provided an overview of the recent Training of Trainers (TOT) and expressed gratitude for participants' engagement. She also mentioned:

- Following the TOT, focal points will be organizing training sessions beginning this week for members of their sector working groups. The trainings will continue over the next two weeks.
- Tailored support will be provided for focal points (up to 4 individual sessions) to develop the action plans.
- The action plans will contribute to the sector-specific Gender Action Plan(s) and Sector Tip Sheets.
- Three group learning sessions are planned to enhance networking among focal points.

Afaf Khalil, Protection Sector Lead (MoSA)

Additionally, Afaf discussed the shrinking gender and protection space, emphasizing the following recent challenges:

- GBV services are under threat, especially in the North and Akkar regions, with media attacks and threats to service centers.
- Community and religious leaders called for anti-GBV and anti-gender actions, impacting service organizations.
- Some partners had to suspend activities due to these challenges.
- State actors requested the exclusion of "gender" and "GBV" terms from policies and action plans.
- The gender and GBV working groups collaborated on a position paper and advocacy messages to address these challenges.

Community Based Protection Learning

Sophie Etzold, GBV Officer (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

Regarding community-based protection learning, Sophie noted that:

- The 'Community-Based Protection Guidance' document was developed based on a learning event that took place at the sector level. The primary objective is to include non-Protection sector activities related to community-based initiatives.
- Sectors are requested to review the document and provide examples of their community-based interventions.
- A meeting will be scheduled on 27 October 2023 including various sectors to discuss these examples and integrate them into the document.
- Once the guidance is finalized, it will be circulated among relevant parties.

Action Point: The 'Community Based protection Guidance 2023' will be shared with sector coordination teams to review the document, specifically section 5 titled "Community-based approaches across sectors in Lebanon", and provide their inputs by Friday, 20 October 2023 COB.

Q3 Reporting Timelines

Stephanie Laba, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer (UNHCR – Inter-Agency)

For the Q3 reporting timelines, Stephanie mentioned that:

- The following deadlines are to be considered:
  - **Referral Reporting**: Monday, 9 October 2023.
  - **Financial Tracking**: Wednesday, 18 October 2023.
  - **Q3 Sector Dashboard & Logframe**: Wednesday, 18 October 2023 (extended to Friday, 20 October 2023).
- Revision and validation steps can be found on slide 24 of the presentation shared via email.

Action Point:

Sector coordinators are requested to encourage their partners to submit the Referral Reporting and Financial Tracking reports in a timely manner and to also verify the data with their partners. Sector coordinators are also requested to ensure the timely submission of their Q3 Sector Dashboards and Logframes.

Annex 1

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