



Minutes of NATIONAL INTER-AGENCY MEETING

13 August 2021, 10:00-12:00

Remotely on Zoom

Chairperson(s)	Assem Abi Ali – LCRP General Supervisor, MoSA Elina Silen – Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator, UNDP
Agenda of the Meeting	1. Mid-year Funding Update 2. LCRP Mid-Year Results 3. Situation Update – Protection Monitoring and Tensions Overview 4. Cash Assistance Update 5. AOB

Proceedings

1. **Opening** – *Assem Abi Ali, LCRP General Supervisor, Ministry of Social Affairs*

- The LCRP General Supervisor opened the meeting and thanked partners for their participation. The recent decision on the removal of subsidies of fuel will likely impact access to fuel under the LCRP, especially in regard to the winter support.
- The impact of this supply gap is outlined in the [LCRP Business Community Plan](#). To mitigate this issue, there is a need for enhanced collaboration between partners and across sectors. The sectors should complement each other for maximum efficiency and effectiveness.
- Ms. Simona Pari has joined as the Inter-Agency Gender Specialist where she will work to contribute to monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning and design of programming within the LCRP from a gender perspective.

2. **Mid-year Funding Update** - *Elina Silen, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator*

Update on LCRP Q2 Funding as of 30 June:

- \$507.8 M (19% of appeal) (\$287.8 M in Mar). 75% received by UN agencies, 21% by INGOs and 3% by NNGOs.
- Funds received in 2020 for 2021 projects + carry over: \$363.2 M (14% of appeal). (\$357.7 M in Mar).
- Available funds: \$871.1 M (32% of appeal), with \$7.5 M left of unallocated funds.
- 17% (or \$84.6 M) of the funds received between January and June 2021 were for multi-year projects (projects longer than 24months); noting that out of the \$84.6 M, \$27 million are for multi-year projects that will end in 2021.

Funding trends over the years:

- Funding to the LCRP has been rather consistent with around 50% funding for the appeal. Upon donors' request, more focus will be given to presenting funding trends over the years. Last year the LCRP had the highest funding appeal to date. As of now it is at 19% however, the final numbers will be shown by the end of the year.

2019-2021 – New Funding by Quarter



- On a quarterly basis, funding levels have remained similar across the years. However, the carry-over for this year was larger for this year in comparison to previous year mainly due to COVID-19 and carry-over by the Education Sector.
- In terms of funding forecast, in previous years, the funding has been dependent on a funding uplift in Q3 and Q4. For this year, with other competing appeals in the country, the LCRP might not see a similar uplift.
- For the multi-year projects, the funding received to date is low. This will likely impact interventions that require a longer planning period (support to municipalities, Livelihood interventions, institutional support etc.).

Sector Comparative Analysis

- *Basic Assistance Sector* is funded at 24% with gaps in targeting of the population in need for multi-purpose cash assistance. It should be highlighted that the support for vulnerable Lebanese is largely unfunded, and the sector have reached only 3% of this target.
- *Food Security Sector* which has the highest appeal for this year has only received 14% in its funding. As a result, there is a gap of more than 300,000 individuals that are currently not receiving any food assistance at all. For Lebanese, despite the great efforts to increase the food assistance to the vulnerable Lebanese, there is still a large gap in the country. Some of that will be picked up by the ERP, but there is still a major funding gap within the LCRP.
- *Shelter Sector remains extremely underfunded.* Key interventions that are not funded include cash-for-rent, minor repair interventions and preparedness and preparation for the storm interventions, and the impact will be severe as we move into winterization season.
- *Health Sector is funded at 50%* with specific funding gaps including dialysis and blood disease support (completely cut due to unexpected funding cuts). Other gaps include support to routine vaccinations and ensuring stock of acute and chronic disease medication.
- *Water Sector* is funded at 46% however, only 14% is new funding. One specific gap is access to safe water in permanent locations where the sector has only reached 3% of the target.

3. Mid-year Results - Elina Silen, Senior Inter-Agency Coordinator

Strategic Objective 1: Ensure protection of vulnerable populations

Protection Sector

- Greater emphasis is placed individuals with special needs
- The target for case management and counseling for psych-social support has been almost reach by the mid-year.
- The Child Protection Sector has received a significant level of during this year.
- Some of the community-based protection activities that were suspended due to COVID-19 are now being implemented to include the boys' and girls' community engagement and interventions targeting care givers.

Livelihoods

- Has overachieved some targets, which might be attributed to over reporting by some partners (this will be revised by the sectors).

Strategic Objective 2: Provide immediate assistance to vulnerable populations

Basic Assistance

- 169,437 households reached with regular cash transfers (Syr, Leb, Pal) – (target 197,385); 8,000 households reached with UNICEF Integrated Child Wellbeing Program.

Food Security



- The in-kind food assistance has exceeded the target set for 125,947 as the sector was able to reach 512,155.
- The figures are indicative of the increased need for food assistance, but it also shows that partners were able to respond.

Shelter

- The achievements are very low due to the large funding gap.

Strategic Objective 3: Support service provision through national systems

Health

- Support to the PHC centers continues, the number of the subsidized health care consultations are in-line with the progress of last year.
- The sector aims to reach their end of year targets.

Social Stability

- The key risks highlighted this year are the increased requests from the municipalities conversely, the target is underachieved.
- The Inter-Sector is working closely with partners in the sub-national Inter-Sector to check whether it is possible to reprogram some of the funds to support the basic services under the municipalities' mandates.

WaSH

- The achievements are moving forward for support of temporary locations, but there are issues around the targets in the permanent locations.

Strategic Objective 4: Reinforce Lebanon's economic, social and environmental stability

Livelihoods

- One of the many key achievements is the \$1.29M USD invested in LH labor-intensive public work projects (target \$168.75M).

Food Security

- The Food Security sector has been able to overachieve in some cases, for example, 14,550 individuals have access to temporary/casual agricultural labour while the target was 13,340.

4. Situation Update – Protection Monitoring and Tensions Overview - LCRP Sector Coordinators and WFP

- The presentation provided an update on the latest Inter-Agency Situation Update which draws on LCRP partner reporting through sectors and other information sources related to key contextual developments in the Jan – May period that affect operations. The following are some of the key points presented (the presentation includes the comprehensive inputs). The Situation Analysis can be reached through this link:

<https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/87896>

Deepening Socio-Economic Vulnerability – BA Sector Coordinator, Ruba Cheiab

- Between January and March 2021 (Q1 2021), there were 272,244 calls to the UNHCR-WFP Call Centre related to requests for cash and food assistance, a 16% increase compared to Q1 2020. As of June 2021, the MPCA transfer value was only covering 47% of estimated needs.



- The Non-Food Items Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), has reached 1,025,000 LBP/ Month in May 2021 (source: Microsoft Power BI). The basket of 12 commodities (hygiene items, blankets, and cooking gas), excluding the services component of the SMEB, increased by 6% between April and May 2021. Between October 2019 and May 2021, the basket increased by 298%.

Increasing Difficulty to Cover Food Needs - FSS Sector Coordinator, Elie Choueiri

- Revised Food SMEB recorded a 30% increase between June and July 2021, at LBP 349,533.
- The cost of the revised food SMEB in June 2021 is more than six times the cost of the basket back in October 2019 (557% increase).
- Weekly preliminary data from WFP contracted shops show that basket reached up to LBP 396,447, before dropping 7% to LBP 369,899, following the decrease in the exchange rate.
- Decrease in weekly cost not expected to last long as informal rate resumed depreciating.

Increasing Social Tensions - Conflict Analysis and Reporting Officer, Fadel Saleh

- While the amount of survey respondents reporting negative community relations between Lebanese and Syrians dropped from a high of 43.4% in the middle of 2020, to 24.5% in January 2021, this figure had risen again by May 2021 to 29.7%.
- With the unemployment rate soaring to 40% and more than 60% of the country's youth unemployed, tensions are expected to increase.
- While a few Lebanese have engaged in acts of violence against Syrians, many more have demonstrated remarkable solidarity with the refugee community. As of March 2021, 15% of refugee households reported that they were aware that Lebanese neighbors supported refugee families during this time. However, this represents a decrease from 20% in February.

Reduced Access to Service – Health Sector Coordinator, Stephanie Laba

- Individuals: Unable to afford treatment &/or transportation to primary healthcare centers and hospitals. Deprioritizing non-urgent healthcare including preventive care.
- Institutions: Healthcare facilities struggling to maintain medical supply stock and prevent staff turnover.

Donor Inquires

- Has the vaccination coverage for HCWs improved? The numbers of registered HCWs are inflated as there are duplicates on the registration platform and the data needs cleaning. So far, the IMPACT team has not managed this due to the small size of their team and the need for additional support. There are also discussions ongoing within the National Coordinating Committee regarding how to further encourage/promote vaccine uptake among HCWs though nothing has been concluded as of yet.
- How is the electricity situation affecting the Health sectors? To the sector's knowledge, there has been no wastage of vaccines due to electricity cuts. Main storage location of PZ ULT is at RHUH and it is still maintained for cold chain as generator capacity was established at the time the storage was established. No reported wastage from vaccination sites

Reduced Access to Services – WaSH Sector Coordinator, Rania Abdallah

- At institutional level, due to the devaluation of the Lebanese Pound, the Water Establishments are facing difficulties in accessing spare parts and fuel for the pumping stations.



- At household level, people are increasingly relying on water tankers to compensate for the shortages (more unsafe and 5-12 times more expensive).
- Sanitation and Solid Waste Services are also interrupted, posing additional public health risks as well as negative hygiene coping strategies especially for women and adolescent girls.

Reduced Access to Service – Education Sector Coordinator, Hala Helu

- Difficulties are being faced in the delivery of remote learning due to the challenge of accessing devices, the internet and electricity for most students.
- Closure of schools and educational learning centers run by partners.
- Continued remote learning with lack of equity in access, second shift schools delayed until end of July.

Increased Protection Risks - Protection Sector Interim Coordinator, Rasha Akil

- Increased needs for Protection services such as PSS and case management from all population groups including Lebanese, with the deterioration of protection space - 4804 referrals for protection in Q4 2020 vs 5711 referrals in Q1 2021.
- Eviction threats and evictions (individual and collective) remain a critical concern for refugees and migrants, mainly due to the inability to pay rent, but increasingly due to tensions - the UNHCR Collective Evictions Tracking Tool indicates a slight increase in Q1 in both collective eviction notices issued (38 compared to 34 in Q4 2020) and actual evictions (11 compared to 10 in Q4 2020)
- Field reports indicate that tensions over rent remain high, and some 10,501 individuals remain at risk of collective eviction, as well as tensions over relocation of evicted individuals
- During Q1 2021, 3% of refugee households reported having at least one child engaged in child labour, citing financial necessity as the main driver.
- Of those children engaged in child labour, 69% were not attending school. While 27% of them were not attending due to COVID-19 related school closures, the majority (62%) were not attending because their income was too important for the family.

UNHCR Protection Monitoring; Key findings 2nd Quarter 2021 – Mclean Ayearst, Associate Protection Officer, UNHCR

- UNHCR conducts protection monitoring with partners on an ongoing basis to analyze trends in the protection environment and risks facing refugees. UNHCR's protection monitoring partners - Caritas, Intersos, and SHEILD conduct interviews with refugee households to elicit their feedback on the overall protection environment in Lebanon and the impact of COVID-19 on their lives.
- The sampling of households and findings presented are representative both at the regional and at the national level. In addition, partners conduct a number of interviews with key informants of different profiles to complement the quantitative analysis from the household interviews. When needs for specific services, assistance or information are identified during interviews, UNHCR's protection monitoring partners refer the individuals concerned accordingly. Information on COVID-19 is systematically provided during each call, and persons needing help to register for vaccination are referred for assistance.
- The presentation included an overview of the following: Socio-economic situation, Growing debt reliance and other highlights.

Some key findings:

- ✓ **93%** of households were in debt as of June 2021
- ✓ **3,284,518** (LBP) is the average household debt



- ✓ **691,081** (LBP) is the average debt incurred by households in the last 30 days
- ✓ **95%** rise in household debt from the 2020 VASyR
- ✓ **14%** of households reported that all members above the age of 15 have **legal residency**
- ✓ **97%** of households do not have one member vaccinated against COVID-19, and in **77%** of households all members are hesitant to get vaccinated

5. Cash Assistance Update –Feedback from LCRP Steering Committee – Assem Abi Ali, LCRP General Supervisor, MoSA

- The numbers from the Protection Monitoring report are shocking as the situation is getting worse by the day. Therefore, there is a need to look at revising the transfer values for cash assistance. This issue was presented and discussed at the Steering Committee where there was a consensus that there should be a top up on the cash assistance, taking into consideration the drastic needs under several sectors.
- The Steering Committee agreed that such as top up should be assessed thoroughly by a technical team to agree on evidence to base a decision on top up on. The SC also agreed to move forward on the dollarization due to the current dire situation. MoSA has openly expressed that they support dollarization, but this needs to be discussed and analyzed in a detailed manner taking not consideration the challenges when it comes to Conflict Sensitivity and Do-No-Harm approach.
- A hybrid solution was presented to the Steering Committee, which includes a phased approach to be able to start with some major programs and move gradually in a timely manner to other the programs to achieve a dollarized “response” in the future. Some programs will remain in LBP. There is a need to harmonize all programmes (LCRP, ERP, ESSN, NPTP) and ensure that they complement each other.
- The Steering Committee agreed that the international community and donors, represented by the HC/RC, will present a document that indicates how this phased approach will take place so that all partners will have a clear vision on the process of dollarization. This document should be finalized in the upcoming weeks and signed by the HC/RC and the Prime Minister of Lebanon. The next Steering Committee meeting will be held in the beginning of September in order to move forward with the proposed plans.