

16th REGIONAL COORDINATION

MECHANISM MEETING

Beirut, 25-26 November 2011

INFORMATION FOR

PARTICIPANTS

2011



ESCWA

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

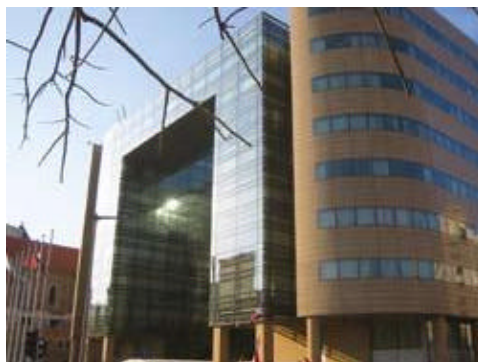
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I. FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR PARTICIPANTS AT THE UNITED NATIONS HOUSE

United Nations House

The United Nations House in Beirut, the permanent headquarters of ESCWA, is located in Riad El-Solh Square in Beirut Central District. The building also houses other United Nations entities, including the United Nations Industrial Development



Organization (UNIDO), the United Nations Office of Drug Control/Centre for International Crime Prevention (UNODC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the United Nations Information Centre/Service (UNIC/UNIS).

Three large conference rooms and several smaller meeting rooms with state-of-the-art facilities occupy an entire floor (B-1 level). The building and grounds include ramps, lifts and toilets. Extensive in-house support services and facilities are available, as described below. Related enquiries may be directed to the General Services Section (room F-133, ext. 1133).

Travel services

Travel assistance is available through the ESCWA Travel Unit located on the first floor of the United Nations House and open during office hours from 7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. (room F-127, ext. 1143 or 1187). Participants are requested to communicate the expected date and time of their arrival and their flight numbers to ESCWA. It is advisable to confirm return travel arrangements well in advance.

Cafeteria

The cafeteria, located on the ground floor of the United Nations House, provides a wide range of meals, snacks, desserts and beverages at reasonable prices. It is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Library

A large library occupies much of the second floor and is open from 7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m., from Monday to Friday for internal users, and from 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. from Monday to Friday for external users. Participants will have access (on the premises only) to publications, journals and newspapers, the Internet and online databases. The library can also provide research services on any topic of interest to participants.

Information services and media coverage

The Meeting will be covered by press and other media accredited by the United Nations. Such representatives will be provided with the required passes and necessary facilities. The UNIC/UNIS provide the media, Government officials, NGOs and other entities with information on the United Nations activities, documents, press releases and other information materials. It also produces press releases, collaborates with local radio and television broadcasters and organizations, and participates in arranging media events to promote activities of ESCWA and other United Nations entities. All enquiries related to media coverage and public information should be directed to Mr. Bahaa ElKoussy, Director, UNIC/UNIS Beirut, either by e-mail at: unic-beirut@un.org or by phone on extension 1830. The ESCWA website provides up-to-date information on the structure and activities of the secretariat, as well as access to the library and other resources. Participants may access the site at: <http://www.escwa.un.org>.

Medical facilities

Medical facilities adequate for first aid in cases of emergency will be provided by the ESCWA secretariat. The ESCWA clinic is located on the first floor of the United Nations House (rooms F-145 to F-147, ext. 1145, 1146 and 1147) and is open during official working hours (7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m., from Monday to Friday). For serious emergencies, the secretariat will ensure immediate transportation by ambulance and admission to a hospital with first class facilities.

In the event of a medical emergency, the following ESCWA staff can be contacted for assistance and proper directions:

Name	Extension	Tel. (direct)	Mobile
Dr. Josette Sfeir	1144	01-978144 01-978147	70-993100
Ms. Lina Soubra	1145	01-978145	03-189941
Ms. Sana Saab	1146	01-978146	70-101635

Moreover, there are many hospitals located in and around Beirut with proficient and experienced medical staff (including four major University Hospitals, just 5 minutes away from the United Nations House):

American University of Beirut Medical Center	01-3961+9611350000
Hotel-Dieu de France Hospital	01-61 +9611615300
Saint George Hospital University Medical Center	01- +9611581700
Rafic Hariri University Hospital	+9611830000

Security and safety

The ESCWA Security and Safety Section, based on the ground floor of the United Nations House (GF-00 and GF-03, ext. 1000 or 1003), operates on a 24-hour basis. Security officers are prepared to provide assistance in all matters relating to security and safety. The Section maintains contact with all local emergency services and relevant authorities. Officers may also provide information on how to contact ESCWA staff members, if necessary. In the event of an emergency, the Chief of the Security and Safety Section can be contacted for assistance (GF-03, ext. 1003).

Internet access

Wireless Internet is available on all floors as well as the ground floor, MZ and B1 conference areas. Except for the conference area at the B1 level, access to the Internet on all other floors requires a pass key which is posted in general public areas on each floor.

Postal services

Incoming letters and telegrams will be distributed to participants. Participants who expect mail to arrive after their departure should contact the ESCWA Mail and Registry Unit (room MB-11, ext. 1033) and provide a forwarding address. During the Meeting, mail for participants should be addressed to:
Name of participant (Title of the Meeting)
c/o Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)
P.O. Box 11-8575
Riad El-Solh square
Beirut, Lebanon

Telecommunications services

The country code for Lebanon is (961). It is followed by the local area code and the telephone number. The area code for Beirut is (01) and for mobile phones is (03), (70) or (71). If you are dialing Lebanon from outside the country, you must omit the (0) in the area code and for the mobile phone starting with (03). For example, to reach the secretariat from outside Lebanon, you may dial the country code +961 followed by the mobile or area code then by the 6 digit phone number (+961-1-xxxxxx for placing calls to Beirut, +961-3-xxxxxx, +961-70-xxxxxx or +961-71-xxxxxx for placing calls to mobile numbers).

The main listed telephone number of ESCWA is +961-1-981301. Direct calls can be made to the required staff member from inside Lebanon by dialing 01-978 followed by the last 3 digits of the four-digit extension of the party sought. For example, if the secretariat extension being sought is 1900 then the number to dial from inside Lebanon would be 01-978900. Direct internal calls from within the United Nations House can be made by dialing the four-digit extension alone.

Telephone information may be obtained from the ESCWA Communications Unit (room F-229, ext. 1210); the operator may be reached within the building by dialing "9". Incoming telephone calls for visitors will be put through whenever possible. Personal telephone calls, fax, mail and courier services may be provided against cash payment.

The ESCWA fax numbers are +961-1-981510/1. The Communications Unit may be reached by e-mail at: afeworko@un.org

Public pay phones are also available and can be used to make local and international calls. Most Lebanese use mobile phones, and coverage extends throughout the country. Pay phone cards are available in post offices, kiosks and smoke shops; mobile phone cards can be purchased from mobile phone retail shops which are abundantly available throughout Lebanon.

II. FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN LEBANON

Accommodation

Hotel accommodation is available at reasonable rates for persons attending the Meeting. A comprehensive list of hotels in the area and their prices may be requested from the Procurement and Travel Unit at ESCWA (room F-141, ext. 1141). For more information on hotels in Beirut, see the full list of hotels with special UN ESCWA rates, provided in your information email. The list is also available on the UN ESCWA website: <http://www.escwa.un.org>.

Please see the selected sample of hotels below:

Hotel	Price	Contact
Intercontinental Phoenicia 5*- Minet el Hosn Beirut	Single room rate: \$215 Low Season	Cynthia Khoury Tel: +961 1 369 961, Email: Phoenicia@phoenicia-ic.com
Gefinor Rotana 5* Clemenceau Street Beirut	Single room rate: \$115 Low Season	Eddy Daccache Tel: +961 1 371888 Email: res.gefinor@rotana.com
Markazieh Monroe Suites, Downtown Beirut, close to EScWA	Single room rate: \$120 Low Season	Chady Marcos Tel;+961 1 991 200
Crown Plaza Hotel, Hamra Beirut	Single room rate: \$155-155 Low Season	Christelle Madi Tel: +961 1 754 755 Email: cmadi@cpbeirut.com

Weather

Weather in Lebanon is generally moderate, typical of many Mediterranean countries and is characterized by four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. In coastal areas, winters are generally cool and rainy whilst summers are hot and humid. In more elevated areas, temperatures usually drop below freezing during the winter, sometimes heavy snow; while summers are warm and dry.

During the Meeting, the temperature is expected to range between 15° and 25°C.

Banking, currency and exchange rates

The unit of currency is the Lebanese pound (or lira). Coins are issued in denominations of LL250 and LL500 and notes in denominations of LL1,000, LL5,000, LL10,000, LL20,000, LL50,000 and LL100,000. The current exchange rate for the United Nations programmes is US\$1.00 = LL1,501, while the exchange rate on the Beirut market is US\$1.00 = LL1,500.

There are no exchange restrictions on the inflow and outflow of local and foreign currency or on the exchange and transfer of currencies. Banks are open between 8 a.m. and 2 p.m., from Monday to Friday, and between 8 a.m. and 12 noon on Saturdays. Exchange offices are open until late in the evening. There are several banks located in the vicinity of the United Nations House.

The United States dollars are used widely throughout the country. Restaurants, hotels and stores often quote their prices in US dollars, and many establishments may convert and provide US dollar prices for you upon request.

Money or traveler checks can be exchanged at banks, private money exchange shops and major hotels. Major credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club etc.) are accepted at most stores, restaurants and hotels throughout the country. Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are also widely available in Beirut and main cities throughout the country and usually dispense both US dollars and Lebanese pounds.

Transportation

Many travel agencies in Beirut have modern buses available for sightseeing and tourist trips to various areas in Lebanon. In addition, there are numerous car rental and taxi offices. Commuting between hotels and the United Nations House can be made by taxi or “service” (LL10,000 per car or LL2,000 per passenger respectively, negotiated before departure). Such vehicles are plentiful and may be hailed along any street in Beirut. However, it is recommended to use taxi companies which are considered safer.

Restaurants and shopping

There are many Lebanese, European and Middle Eastern restaurants in and around Beirut, as well as a number of fast food restaurants. Many

restaurants are located in the Beirut Central District, minutes' walk away from the United Nations House. More information can be obtained from any hotel in Beirut.

Sightseeing

Main cities, historical landmarks

The Capital of Lebanon is Beirut. Other main cities include Tripoli, Jbeil (Byblos), Saida (Sidon) and Tyre (Sur).

The United Nations House is located in the Beirut Central District. Sights in the immediate vicinity include the newly-restored town centre area, offering shops, restaurants, Roman ruins, the Parliament and Government Houses; the Corniche, a wide-paved walkway along the sea; and the famous Hamra Street, for those who like to shop. The Ministry of Tourism or any of the numerous travel agencies in Beirut may be contacted for further information on guided tours or other cultural and touristic sites of interest around Lebanon. The Cedars of Lebanon, which are one of its most important landmarks, serve as the country's national emblem. The most important historical landmarks are Baalbeck, Beiteddine, Byblos, Jeitta Grotto, Aanjar, and Qadisha Valley. The following website may be visited for more information: <http://www.lebanon-tourism.gov.lb>.

Government office hours

Working hours in Government offices are from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., except on Sundays and official holidays.

Internet

Internet cafés are available throughout Lebanon and many hotels and restaurants now offer high-speed Internet access for free or for a small fee.

Language

While Arabic is Lebanon's official language, English and French are widely spoken. Most Lebanese speak at least two or three languages. Many establishments provide signs, menus and information in both Arabic and English.

