



Delegation of the
European Union to Lebanon



PRESS RELEASE

Third Consultative Group Meeting on the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework

Beirut, November 16, 2021 - The Consultative Group (CG) of the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) held its third meeting earlier today.

The 3RF Consultative Group consists of the Government of Lebanon, Lebanese civil society, the European Union, United Nations, the World Bank and international donors. Together they monitor progress and give strategic direction to the reforms and activities under the 3RF.

The 3RF Consultative Group members discussed progress achieved so far and next steps in four main sectors: the anti-corruption sector; the Build Beirut Businesses Back Better (B5) programme; the social protection sector; and the housing sector. Below are the co-chairs' statement of the third 3RF Consultative Group meeting and list of attendees.

The 3RF report and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the 3RF can be found [here](#).

Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework Third Consultative Group Meeting: Co-Chairs' Statement

1. The third Consultative Group (CG) meeting of the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework (3RF) was held on 16 November 2021 at the Grand Serail, co-chaired by the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Lebanese civil society, European Union (EU) and United Nations (UN).
2. The economic, financial and social situation of most Lebanese has deteriorated further since last meeting in July. More than half the population live below the national poverty line and an increasing share of households has difficulty accessing basic services. Rebuilding trust in the social contract is essential for people to know there is a future for them in Lebanon, especially for those bereaved after the blast and for women.
3. The CG welcomed the formation of the new government, which took office on 10 September, and the ministerial statement that aligns with 3RF priorities. This commitment needs to be translated into concrete action and the Government and Parliament need to deliver on priority reforms. The CG welcomed the engagement of the Prime Minister, the Parliament, and the Presidency. The CG praised the formation of ministerial committees to further the work of the 3RF, and for being inclusive of civil society.
4. The CG repeated its call for justice and accountability through a transparent, independent and credible investigation into the Beirut port explosion, and for upholding due judicial process.

5. The CG reviewed progress on essential reforms discussed in the previous Consultative Group meeting. CG reiterated the need for macroeconomic and fiscal reforms, in the framework of an IMF programme, as sine qua non for stabilization and recovery of the economy of Lebanon. Potential benefits from the IMF Special Drawing Rights should be maximized. CG also reiterated the call for free and fair elections, to be held according to the electoral calendar provided by law and ensuring full representation and participation of women in the democratic process and in government. As called for at the second CG meeting, civil society is included in implementation of the 3RF at sector level.
6. The CG focused on how Lebanese Government, Lebanese civil society and the international community are working together to deliver the commitments of the 3RF. The CG called for donors to contribute to the 3RF, through the LFF or bilateral programmes that contribute to 3RF commitments. Priority in the present phase is people-centred recovery. The following next steps will all be taken before the fourth Consultative Group early next year.
 - i. In the housing sector (pillar *Improving Services and Infrastructure*), civil society was first to respond after the blast and continues to support those worst affected, though uneven attention is given to poor neighbourhoods. There is a need for a housing recovery strategy and action plan, linking housing to wider urban recovery while remaining sensitive to heritage, cultural life and the environment.
 - ii. The CG calls for a coordination planning unit for urban recovery in the office of the Governor of Beirut together with the Mayor of Beirut. This unit will coordinate with the Army Forward Emergency Room, civil society and the international community. The Governor of Beirut welcomed this proposal and will work with the 3RF housing working group to develop a Terms of Reference. The working group will also develop templates of contracts to protect both tenants and landlords.
 - iii. The CG called on Parliament to extend the hold on evictions introduced by law 194 for an additional year. The CG also called on the Forward Emergency Room to share their data on reconstruction efforts, on the Directorate General of Antiquities and UNESCO to share their data on heritage housing, and on donors to share their data on housing recovery and reconstruction efforts.
 - iv. Social protection (pillar *Social Protection, Inclusion and Culture*) has seen the National Poverty Targeting Plan double to 36 000 extremely poor households; soon set to double again. In-kind assistance was provided to more than 300 000 families nation-wide affected by the economic crisis. Some 20 000 disabled beneficiaries will soon receive social grants. The CG reiterated the call for a transparent 2022 budget with strong funding for social protection.
 - v. CG welcomes the Prime Minister' decision to immediately implement the ESSN and form a ministerial committee on Social Protection and a technical committee to work on the national Social Protection strategy. The Minister of Social Affairs in coordination with concerned ministers will lead on reactivation of a structured dialogue on Social Protection, together with the Social Protection Coordination Forum that was set up for the 3RF. The CG called for the government to endorse the Social Protection Strategy. The CG called on Parliament for ratification of the convention of people with disabilities.
 - vi. The B5 was launched on 11 November and will start disbursing to SMEs in December, a major development in support of the pillar *Jobs and Economic Opportunities*.
 - vii. The CG welcomed commitment from Parliament to expedite passing of the Competition, Insolvency and Bankruptcy laws. The Minister of the Economy committed to finalize the implementation decree for the e-transaction law and develop a detailed action plan to deliver on the business environment strategy in coordination with the 3RF working group. The Government will simplify export procedures through ministerial letters. Parliament was requested to extend law 194 also to protect businesses affected by the blast.

- viii. Anti-corruption (pillar *Improving Governance and Accountability*) progress was noted on formation of an inter-ministerial committee to implement the Public Procurement law. Parliament called on the international community for technical and financial support to draft ten decrees needed for the law to enter into force August 2022.
 - ix. CG welcomed the appointment of the Anti-Corruption Committee headed by Minister Riachi and requests all nominations and an adequate budget to be announced before the next CG. The CG welcomed Government and Parliament commitment to work with the 3RF Rule of Law working group to review drafts of the Independence of the Judiciary law and to request the assistance of the Venice Commission in finalizing the draft law.
7. The CG praised civil society for self-organizing and for their constructive stance, channelling the expertise and energy of more than 150 civil society organizations and experts into the 3RF through concrete recommendations.
 8. The CG praised the Prime Minister's decision to revitalize and expand the scope of the Central Management Unit (CMU) to act as coordination on international cooperation in Lebanon. The CMU will include three CSO and three donors and development partners and be located in the Office of the Prime Minister. Terms of Reference of the new CMU will be developed before the next CG.
 9. The CG saluted civil society and volunteers inside and outside Lebanon. Civil society is included in implementation of the 3RF at sector level. Fourteen sectoral working groups have been activated to bring together implementers and experts from the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union and civil society. The CG welcomed Government commitment to have representation in each of the working groups before the next CG meeting, in addition to representatives from donors. These working groups serve to implement the 3RF commitments including structured reforms required to unlock resources. Only by engaging in an inclusive and constructive policy dialogue, can Lebanon overcome its challenges.

The participants' list is attached to this summary.

Attendees in the third 3RF Consultative Group meeting

State Institutions of Lebanon

H.E. Najib Mikati, Prime Minister
H.E. Saade Chami, Deputy Prime Minister
H.E. Youssef Khalil, Minister of Finance
H.E. Henry Khoury, Minister of Justice
H.E. Najla Riachi, Minister of State for Administrative Reform
H.E. Amin Salam, Minister of Economy and Trade
H.E. Hector Hajjar, Minister of Social Affairs
Mr Marwan Abboud, Governor of Beirut
Mr Jamal Itani, Mayor of Beirut
Mr Georges Adwan MP
Mr Ibrahim Kanaan MP
Mr Yassine Jaber MP
Mr Antoine Choucair, General Director Lebanese Presidency

United Nations

Ms Najat Rochdi, Deputy Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator
Mr Arkan al-Siblini, Regional Manager at UNDP Arab States
Mr Rony Gedeon, Resident Coordinator's Office

World Bank

Ms Mouna Couzi, Lebanon Operations Manager and LFF Manager
Ms Karima Ben Bih, Disaster Risk Management and Resilience
Ms Zeina el-Khoury, Private Sector Specialist

Donors

H.E. Ralph Tarraf, Ambassador of the European Union
H.E. Chantal Chastenay, Ambassador of Canada
H.E. Dr Marion Weichelt, Ambassador of Switzerland
H.E. Hans Peter van der Woude, Ambassador of the Netherlands
H.E. José María Ferré, Ambassador of Spain

H.E. Merete Juhl, Ambassador of Denmark

H.E. Nicoletta Bombardiere, Ambassador of Italy

H.E. Pierre Duquesne, Ambassador of France for international support to Lebanon

Mr Damien Sorrell, EIB Representative for Lebanon

Mr Khalil Dinguizli, Head of EBRD office Lebanon

Mr Richard Michaels, Deputy Ambassador of the United States of America

Ms Katharina Lack, Chargée d'Affaires at the Embassy of Germany

Ms Lucy Andrews, Development Director Lebanon at the British Embassy

Ms Maki Yamaguchi, First Secretary at the Embassy of Japan

Ms Najla Farid Nakhle, Economist Head of Office of the IMF

Ms Raluca Răduță, Programme Manager Social Protection at the EU Delegation

Lebanese Civil Society

Ms Asma Zein of the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB)

Mr Edward Bitar of Live Love Lebanon

Mr Fadlallah Dagher of Beirut Heritage Initiative

Mr George Antoun of Lutheran World Relief

Mr Maroun Karam of Beitna Beita

Mr Nadim Abdo of Arcenciel

Mr Richard Nader of St Vincent DePaul

Ms Mona Harb of Beirut Urban Lab

Ms Sylvana Lakkis of the Lebanese Union of Persons with Physical Disabilities

Ms Zoya Rouhana of KAFA (Enough) Violence and Exploitation

3RF Independent Oversight Body (observers)

Mr Julien Courson of the Lebanese of Transparency International

Ms Reem el-Dana of Kulluna Irada

Ms Roula Mikael of the Maharat Foundation

3RF Technical Team and Secretariat

Mr Christian de Clercq, UN Resident Coordinator's Office

Mr Rein Nieland, EU Delegation Head of Cooperation

Ms Rana Bou Saada, communications expert

Mr Khalil Gebara of the 3RF Secretariat

Mr Jaap van Diggele of the 3RF Secretariat