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**Summary record**

**Humanitarian Country Team meeting, Lebanon**

**Thursday, 6 August 2020, 11:15-12:10**

**Present: Abaad, ACF, Al Majmoua, Amel, Care International, DFID, EEAS-Beirut, ECHO, FAO, ICRC, Inter-agency, LHDF, LHIF, Medair, MSF, NCA, NRC, OCHA, UNDAC, UNDP, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIFIL, UNOPS, UNRCO, UNRWA, UN WOMEN, US Embassy, WFP, and WHO.**

The **HC** offered condolences to colleagues who have lost loved ones in the disaster. She commended all efforts deployed in responding to the tragic event and called on everyone to continue and increase their mobilization. She stressed the exceptional nature of the current situation and highlighted this would require a specific and dedicated response under her leadership as Humanitarian Coordinator. The response will integrate all population groups affected by the disaster, including refugees, and will be coordinated with partners and UN agencies based on their mandates. She noted the first sitrep published by OCHA and emphasized the importance of sharing updates and information with OCHA to build the understanding of the situation and support the HCT as key decision-making entity for the coordination of the response, in support of the Government. The HC reported on her meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and the Minister of Public Health (MoPH) who highlighted hospitals’ Intensive Care Units (ICU) critical needs. She announced that the Lebanon Humanitarian Fund (LHF) would release US$9million to meet critical health needs and that an initial CERF allocation would also be announced shortly by the ERC. Finally, the HC noted that a Member States briefing chaired by the ERC and the Lebanon PR in NY would take place in New York on Monday 10 August to brief member states and mobilize funds to support Lebanon.

**OCHA** provided a short update on on-going efforts, including in terms of collecting preliminary information from partners to support a first assessment of the needs. OCHA called partners to share available information to build this comprehensive picture and feed into the daily sitrep. Search and rescue teams have arrived the night before, from Netherlands, Poland, France and Czech Republic. The UNDAC team lead has also arrived overnight and will be joined by a larger group of colleagues.

**ACF/LHIF** noted that health organizations are concerned about the capacity of the Government to carry out health assessments, offering international organizations’ support and resources. She underlined international organizations’ interest in contributing to any multi-sectoral needs’ assessment and to the dedicated coordination structure.

**WHO** highlighted the ongoing assessment of hospital capacity, noting the rough estimates on medical needs in the immediate terms. WHO stressed the continuation of COVID-19 emergency, which should remain a priority. A Qatar field hospital has been set up and will be manned by the team of the St George Hospital which has been destroyed in the explosion. Eight countries have deployed emergency medical teams to Lebanon, and WHO will deploy shortly an emergency medical teams’ coordinator to work with MoPH, as well as UNDAC and other emergency structures, to ensure a coordinated approach. Supplies from WHO in Dubai have arrived to Lebanon and are being distributed to 10 hospitals which are treating the highest numbers of cases. WHO noted that the AUB report underlines that the level of toxicity in the air has decreased. However, toxic small particles in the air and on the ground fly around when there is cleaning. The report calls to wear masks and stay away from areas close to the explosions.

**WFP** underlined the timeliness of the discussion on coordination considering the multiple offers of assistance of supplies, health assistance, food, the funding commitments, etc., which require taking stock of what is going on. On the food security situation, WFP highlighted their concerns due to Beirut port destruction, which used to receive 80% of food cargos; while Saida and Tripoli ports do not have 40% of Beirut port capacity. In a meeting with the Minister of Economy and Trade, where WFP raised the issue of food availability, the Minister highlighted the availability of wheat in Lebanon for a period of approximately 6 weeks. WFP noted that they will offer to support the government by deploying quick technical teams to help with mobile cranes and logistical modalities to keep a part of Beirut port operational. WFP is also consulting with donors to supply wheat flour at its initial stage and also examining the possibility of implementing quick emergency intervention for 3 months. WFP is also striving to provide food for 300,000 people who became homeless due to the explosion in Beirut and its surrounding by repurposing in-kind food assistance initially planned for the COVID response.

**UN Women** noted offering to deploy a gender advisor to support the needs assessment undertaken by UNDAC and OCHA.

**UNHCR** underlined that seven Syrian refugees died, and one is missing, due to the explosions. Beirut / Mount Lebanon is the second area with largest concentration of refugees in Lebanon; where crowded areas like Bourj Hammoud are concerning. Outside Beirut area, inter-agency has conducted rapid needs assessments to evaluate level of displacement and assess displaced people’s needs, including refugees and non-refugees. Protection, shelter, psychosocial and mental health are key response priorities. While UNHCR teams are mobilized, UNHCR will be sharing information that they have as they progress with data collection. UNHCR had supported the expansion of hospitals and the set-up of additional ICU beds and is prepared to accelerate the second phase of hospitals expansion interventions should the need arise.

**The UNDAC** Team Leader highlighted that the UNDAC would provide support to the Government, the HC and the HCT in the humanitarian response. UNDAC will also work closely with the EU civil protection teams, and with USAR teams. Additional UNDAC team members will be joining in the coming days. He reiterated the importance of assessments, information and coordination.

**UNRWA** noted that one Palestine refugee passed away near the port due to Beirut explosions, with others injured or missing. While camps have not undergone any significant damage, the continuous deterioration of the economic situation will create pressure and greater demands for relief assistance and particularly cash assistance among Palestine refugees in the coming months.

**ECHO** highlighted that EU member states are offering PPEs support and are also deploying medical teams and search and rescue teams from Italy, France, Netherlands, etc. EU member states are also interested in examining needs to review the assistance that they can provide. Two liaison officers have also been deployed for coordination the support provided by EU membership. ECHO is also surging health and shelter experts, as well as several others.

**DFID** noted that the UK is deploying 5 million Pounds to support the response in Lebanon, especially for medical and logistics needs.

**OCHA** underlined that it is beefing up its Lebanon presence through OCHA surge in addition to the UNDAC team. As part of the UNDAC team, an environmental specialist has also arrived in Lebanon. OCHA will share contact lists with new UNDAC and OCHA team members supporting the response in Lebanon. On the sitrep, partners are encouraged to share input with Sandy Maroun sandy.maroun@un.org and Alex Binns binns@un.org. Finally, on the coordination structure, OCHA indicated it would discuss bilaterally with relevant stakeholders, including inter-agency and sector colleagues, to propose a suitable coordination structure under the leadership of the HC. In view of the situation, the structure might need to include a logistics-emergency telecom sector/cluster.

The **HC** reiterated the importance of information-sharing and coordination. She noted that a comprehensive rapid needs assessment is critical and asked OCHA to work with partners accordingly. The HC called for a comprehensive sitrep with inputs fed by all partners to OCHA. She stressed on mainstreaming protection, including protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in the response to this crisis. She also highlighted the importance of logistics. On coordination, she re-emphasized the need to ensure efforts would be coordinated with her/OCHA, stressing that it was everyone’s duty to contribute. She committed to well-planned and focused HCT meetings, every second day or more as required.

**Action Points:**

* **OCHA** to carry-out bilateral discussions with relevant stakeholders on the coordination architecture.
* **OCHA to revert shortly** on next stepswith regard to **needs assessment.**
* **Partners** to share information on the needs and response with OCHA for the daily sitrep.
* **Next meeting to take place on Saturday 8 August.**