**Answers to the Questionnaire on Reducing the Environmental Impacts of the Global Food System on Human Rights –**

**Ministry of Environment - Lebanon**

**Answer to Question 1:**

Examples of ways in which the environmental impacts of the global food system are having adverse impacts on human rights could happen during any phase of a food system, starting from food production including agriculture, going through processing, transport, reaching consumption.

Any bad environmental practice during one of these activities could have severe impacts on the human rights, for example:

* Not being compliant with national and international limit values and standards set for waste water and air quality parameters;

**Answer to Question 2:**

Impacts of Climate Change on Agriculture in Lebanon:

Agriculture in Lebanon is one of the most vulnerable sectors to climate change due to the limited availability of water and land resources and the pressure exerted by population growth and urbanization.

Higher temperature, reduced precipitation and high evapotranspiration will decrease soil moisture and increase aridity thus affecting the overall agricultural yield of crops. Lebanese agriculture may indeed experience a decrease in productivity for most of the crops and fruit trees targeting mostly wheat, tomatoes, cherries, apples, olives and grapes.

**Answer to Question 3:**

The Ministry of Environment in Lebanon has issued several legislations related to “Food System”, aiming to reduce or eliminate negative environmental impacts caused by the unsustainable production or consumption of food. Among those legislations we can list:

1. Law 444/2002 (Protection of the Environment)
2. Law 78/2018 (Protection of Air Quality)
3. The Environmental Impact Assessment Decree No. 8633/212:

This Decree identifies all projects that need an environmental study. This Decree identifies all the projects that need an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Study or an Initial Environmental Examination Study (IEE) before starting the implementation of the project (Before construction).

The study must indicate what are the mitigation measures to be taken during both construction and operation phases, and must include a proper environmental management and monitoring plan, that the project owner must follow, in order to preserve the environment from damaging.

The list of the projects needing an environmental study, related to the “Food system” are:

* Irrigation Projects
* Water supply projects
* Waste Water projects
* Solid Waste Projects
* Agriculture and Forestry related projects
* Land Reclamation projects
* Fish farming Projects
* Food industries
* Farms

1. Decree No. 8213/2012 (Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Decree)
2. Decree No. 8471/2012 (Environmental Compliance Decree)
3. Decree No. 8018/2002 (Licensing procedures for establishment and operation of industrial enterprises)
4. Ministerial Decisions of Environmental Guidelines of various food industries (For Example Dairy Products, slaughterhouses, Farms, Bakeries, Roasting coffee and seeds, olive oil industries, etc..)
5. Ministerial Decision No. 189/1 of 2016 (Reviewing of Environmental Audit Studies)
6. Ministerial Decisions No. 52/1 of 1996 and 8/1 of 2001 (National Environmental Standards and Environmental Limit Values for air emissions, waste water emissions ..)

**Answer to Question 4:**

1. Same legislations mentioned in the Answer to question 3
2. The Ministry of Environment has achieved over the years various projects and programs through the “Climate Change Projects Unit” aiming to take necessary actions to reduce the climate change effects on Agriculture.

For more info please visit <http://climatechange.moe.gov.lb/agriculture>

1. The Ministry of Environment has established since 1993 the National Ozone Unit responsible of managing the Greenhouse Gas emissions
2. Various Projects and Programs for example:

* Lebanese Environmental Pollution Abatement Project (LEPAP)
* Sustainable Land Management in the Qaraoun Catchment Project
* Lake Qaraoun Pollution Prevention Project (LQPPP)

**Answer to Question 5:**

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly formally adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Agenda consists of 17 global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for ending poverty in all its forms. The Goals are interconnected and the world food programme (WFP) is working to help achieve all of them by 2030. WFP focuses specifically on SDG 2 (support Governments to achieve zero hunger) and SDG 17 (partnership to support implementation of SDGs).

In Lebanon, WFP implements a wide range of food assistance programmes including Cash Based Transfers (CBTs) targeting vulnerable populations affected by the Syria crisis; an array of livelihoods projects such as rehabilitation of agricultural infrastructure, forestry, agricultural markets, and training. Also, WFP implements a school snacks programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) where more than 17,000 Syrian and Lebanese students are served. On another note, WFP is actively engaged in the retail supply chain and works effectively with the +500 contracted shops with the Programme to increase the purchasing power of all retail customers at locations where WFP operates; creating a buying club, COOP and mandatory range initiatives. In addition, the Retail Unit supports in the capacity building of the local retail sector to ensure that it can sustainably meet market standards and consumers' needs; develop training tools and kits to build a professional retail team; training shop keepers by doing one on one visits to shops, and improving shopping standards for customers through encouraging shop keepers to elevate their standards and increase their competitive advantage in a busy marketplace.

WFP is also actively engaged with the Government of Lebanon (GoL) through the National Poverty Targeting programme (NPTP). To that end, WFP supports in the managing the food voucher component of the NPTP which was introduced in 2014, and providing capacity building to the Government’s staff on ecard distribution, monitoring and evaluation, reporting and beneficiary communication.

**THE LEBANESE FOOD SAFETY LAW**

Food safety is considered as a major concern in Lebanon. There is no food safety system in the country even though there are some related initiatives. Food safety regulations, coordination and implementation is not restricted to one Governmental Body and the responsibilities are distributed across several Ministries, which often carry out overlapping controls for food establishments.

In Lebanon, a Food Safety Law (Expedited law No. 35; dated 24/11/2015) was drafted and approved by the Lebanese Parliament. Even though the Law, which is comprised of 49 articles, was published in the Government’s Official Gazette on 26/11/2015, the implementation decrees are still not issued to date. The most important provisions of the Law are the formation of the Food Safety Lebanese Commission (FSLC) which is still not implemented to date; limiting the responsibility of all food related monitoring to the FSLC and devising a coordination mechanism among the FSLC and the relevant Ministries.

**FOOD SAFETY COMMITTEE (FSC)**

Since the FSLC is still not established, a Food Safety Committee (FSC) was established in Lebanon in 2014 through a Cabinet Decree dated 27/11/2014. The FSC is chaired by a representative from the Presidency of the Council of Ministers with membership of the Ministries of Economy, Agriculture, Energy and Water, Tourism, Finance, Public Health, Industry, Interior and Municipalities, Environment and Justice.

The main tasks of the Committee as per the Cabinet’s decree are to:

* Follow up on all food safety issues, coordination and implementation procedures in the country;
* Raise recommendations on food safety issues to the Prime Minister to present to the Cabinet for approval.

Since 2015, the FSC has been setting the grounds to put in place a strong coordination mechanism in the food safety sector among the member Ministries through implementing several activities including:

* Documenting all initiatives on food safety and distributing the tasks among the Ministries.
* Producing a guide on food safety standards which aims to facilitate and harmonize monitoring and inspection efforts in Lebanon. In the guide, the general principles on food hygiene and monitoring activities are based on national standards developed by the Lebanese Standards Institution (LIBOR) affiliated with the Ministry of Industry. The guide still needs to be printed and disseminated.
* Preparing a common monitoring questionnaire for food safety inspection.

The strategic objective of the FSC is to establish a common database for different food facilities (LENFER). LENFER would achieve the following:

* Improve inter-ministerial coordination through continuous communication.
* Establish a common method for categorizing and coding the different food facilities sectors.
* Establish a common method for categorizing and coding all possible food safety violations.
* Exchange information and results of food safety inspections.
* Act as a reference for developing a yearly plan for food safety monitoring.
* Establish an electronic system for a quick internal alarm

Short-term objectives of the FSC include:

* Launch a pilot for the LENFER
* Design, print and disseminate an interactive guide on the general food safety regulations for professionals
* Launch a specialized awareness sessions for professionals
* Launch needs assessment surveys for the food related sectors (vertical and horizontal especially for the water and meat)
* Establish a dedicated website.

Until the FSLC is formed, the FSC will remain the main Government entity that deals and tackles food safety issues in the country.

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**Answer to Question 6:**

Examples of good practices in preventing, reducing, or eliminating environmental impacts caused by the unsustainable production or consumption of food:

1. All the legislations mentioned in the Answer to Question 3 and Questions 4 above
2. The Ministry of Environment has been very active over the years through its various department in the following procedures:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Procedure** | **Responsible managing Department/ Service within the Ministry of Environment** |
| Environmental Impact Assessment | Department of Integrated Environmental Systems/ Service of Environmental Technology |
| * Environmental Audit Studies * Licensing of industrial facilities | Department of Urban Environmental Protection/ Service of Urban Environment |
| Environmental complaints | Service of Regional Departments & Environmental Police |
| Managing Greenhouse Gas Emissions | National Ozone Unit/ Service of Environmental Technology |
| Reducing the Impacts of Climate Change | Climate Change Projects/ Service of Environmental Technology |

**Answer to Question 7:**

Challenges:

1. Law strengthening: Delay in issuing the Application Decrees that must be issued when a new Law is declared official.
2. Difficulties in being active and in performing the executive role on the ground, since the there is a delay in recruiting the Environmental Police.
3. The Ministry of Environment is understaffed

**Answer to Question 8:**

1. Engage the small vulnerable societies in sustainable jobs especially in rural areas.
2. Continuous financing of agricultural and water supply projects in poor rural areas threatened by water shortage.
3. Supporting the farmers and land owners through NGOs, municipalities and local communities.

**Answer to Question 9:**

Although the Ministry of Environment has a very important executive role, when an environmental violation is identified in the food system, the Ministry of Environment makes sure to give notice periods to let to entity to take all the necessary corrective actions and mitigations measures.

The Ministry of Environment is in close collaboration with industries, guiding them and providing them with the necessary legislations that need to be followed, but without losing its role in المحاسبة especially that the Law 444/2002 has dedicated a chapter for environmental sanctions and penalties.

**Answer to question 10:**

* Financial support of low-income states
* Sharing technical capacities and knowledge
* Building capacities and support
* Shifting toward sustainable development
* Enhancing environmental practices within the high-income states

**Answer to Question 11:**

Not related to the Ministry of Environment, but any business in the food system has to be aware of the national legislations related to this business, issued from various related administrations and ministries.