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The Permanent Mission of Lebanon to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and with reference to the letter of the Special Rapporteur on right to food, Mr. Michael Fakhri, dated 9 June 2021, has the honor to enclose herewith the reply of the Lebanese Ministry of Industry concerning the "Food systems and Human Rights".

The Permanent Mission of Lebanon avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 28 July, 2021.



Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Palais des Nations  
1211 Geneva 10

Ys Krowy  
7/16/2021

الجمهورية اللبنانية  
وزارة الصناعة

الوزير

وزارة الخارجية والمغتربين  
= القلم =

الرقم ٥٦٤  
مستشار

الرقم: ١٢١٤-١٠٢٩/و

التاريخ:

١٢ تموز ٢٠٢١

جانب وزارة الخارجية والمغتربين

الموضوع: طلب معلومات حول الأنظمة الغذائية وحقوق الإنسان

المرجع: كتابكم رقم ٨/٧٥٥ تاريخ ٨/٧/٢٠٢١/٦/٢٤ المسجل لدينا

برقم ١٢١٤-١٠٢٩/و تاريخ ٢٠٢١/٧/١

إشارة إلى الموضوع والمرجع المبينين أعلاه،

طلبتم موافاتكم ضمن مهلة أقصاها ٢٠٢١/٦/٣٠ بما تقوم به وزارة الصناعة من إجراءات في سبيل

تأمين الأنظمة الغذائية، كحق من حقوق الإنسان، بهدف تضمين هذه المعلومات في التقرير الذي سيروجه

المقرر الخاص بالحق في الغذاء إلى الدورة العادية ٧٦ للجمعية العامة للأمم المتحدة في خريف ٢٠٢١.

إلا أننا نلقينا هذا الكتاب بتاريخ ٢٠٢١/٧/١،

بناء على طلبكم،

تجدون ريباً الإستمارة التي قمنا بتحديثها بالمعلومات المطلوبة،

للتفضل بالإطلاع وإجراء المقتضى%

وزير الصناعة

د. عماد حبيب الله

د. عماد حبيب الله





## Food systems and human rights

Questions	Ministry of Industry input
<p>1-What are the most salient challenges facing the food systems in your country/region</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the October 2019 crisis, the manufacturing sector has been witnessing increasing pressure and challenges. The unofficial capital controls and the devaluation of the local currency took a great toll on the productivity of the sector. The purchase of foreign currency from the black market meant that most Lebanese-made products became unaffordable, pushing further companies to close down operations due to loss of competitiveness.</li> <li>• The <b>COVID-19</b> crisis came at the worst time for the industrial sector halting all possible recovery efforts. This crisis has also further increased the costs of production for <b>SMEs</b> due to health compliance issues</li> <li>• The agro-food sector also continued to suffer from technical barriers that made access to new export markets hard</li> </ul>
<p>2- Examples of challenges facing the global food system are having adverse impacts on the right to food specifically?</p>	<p>Prior to the acceleration of Lebanon's economic crisis in 2019, UNIDO conducted a road map (2019) literature review that identified challenges facing the agro-food sector. The key findings were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>An oligopolistic agro-food market</b> the agro-food market system is dominated by a limited number of large and midsize formal enterprises with a high amount of capital and a large number of small, often informal businesses and cooperatives with limited financial resources. Due to the agro-food sector's oligopolistic nature, resilience remains limited to few companies with access to financial and</li> </ul>



social capital capabilities. This makes growth and expansion extremely difficult for small enterprises and cooperatives, especially women-led firms. Policy interventions at the macro level and project interventions at the meso level are needed to level the field between large agro-industrialists and MSME firms and cooperatives, including women- and youth-led business initiatives.

- **Low-complexity products** the sector's outputs are characterized by limited variety and a limited capacity to be used as inputs in the production of other items products. This low complexity causes the use of standardized inputs, and therefore difficulty in knowledge accumulation and innovation.
- **Quality concerns** These stems from overuse of chemicals such as pesticides and antibiotics, low water quality and sanitary and phyto sanitary (SPS) standards, weak enforcement of quality regulations, a lack of investment in quality improvements, and weak product testing.
- **Low international market access** Contributing factors include failures to comply with quality standards; ineffective transportation infrastructure; a lack of competitiveness of MSME firms; a lack of institutionalized marketing channels; weak design, packaging, and branding strategies; insufficient or nonexistent trade agreements and the need to renegotiate old agreements;

	<p>and minimal research and development activities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High production costs and a lack of industrial zones and infrastructure</b> More specifically, these include high electricity, land, and labor costs; inefficient water usage; and a lack of industrial zones that enable companies to reduce their outlays, increasing their productivity by enabling them to share the costs of many production components.</li> <li>• <b>Access to finance</b> Access to finance for small non bankable entities is weak, hindering the development of MSMEs in the agro-food sector and many other industries, despite efforts to fill this gap by various microfinance institutions, accelerators, incubators, and donor financing programs.</li> <li>• <b>Financing instability</b> this is a result of an unfavorable business environment, reliance on subsidies and ad hoc financial support, and market dynamics that force farmers to sell their goods at suboptimal prices.</li> <li>• <b>Insufficient and poorly targeted government support</b> this includes limited extension and research services and poor food safety and quality control.</li> </ul>
3- Are there specific challenges that your country has faced in attempting to employ a rights-based approach to transforming food systems without leaving anyone behind?	No
4- To what extent the UN Food System Summit considered those challenges in its deliberations?	We are not informed of these deliberations
5- What are the specific obligations of states and businesses in terms of preventing and addressing adverse impacts caused by the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Government:</b> Support through technical assistance programs, tax exemptions as well as setting up</li> </ul>



<p>unsustainable production or consumption of food</p>	<p>policies, technical regulations and incentives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business operators:</b> their responsibility relies in abiding by global and domestic rules and cooperating with Government in the framework of technical assistance programs</li> </ul>
<p>6- Despite the challenges of the pandemic, what are specific examples of rights-based initiatives and good practices (including policy, standard sand programs) that have successfully improved people's access to adequate food in a sustainable and systematic way</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A guidance document, which relates to recommendations and preventive measures in response to COVID-19, was developed by UNIDO in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry on 22 April 2020. It is intended for industries across all sectors to help them in the implementation of preventive measures against COVID-19;</li> <li>• Minister of Industry decision number 15/1 dated on 12/3/2020 and related to General Preventive Measures against COVID-19 in food industries;</li> <li>• Zaatar Value chain project, which is financed by Italy and is part of the ongoing project "Strengthening Job Creation and Creativity in the Agro-food Sector in Lebanon through Technology Transfer and Skills", is currently implemented by UNIDO in close partnership with the Ministry of Industry in Lebanon and in coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture;</li> <li>• <b>PSDP project:</b> The Productive Sectors Development Program (PSDP) is funded by the Lebanon Recovery Fund through the generous contribution from the Government of Canada and implemented by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations</li> </ul>



Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labor Organization (ILO), UN WOMEN and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with support from the Resident Coordination Office (RCO) in overall coordination. It presents a comprehensive approach to supporting the manufacturing (agro-food) and agriculture sectors in Lebanon, identified as having a high potential for job generation for women and youth. The PSDP was designed to include interlinked activities on the Macro, meso, and Micro levels and present a flagship example for joint service delivery and for promoting the "Delivering as One" approach between the implementing UN agencies. UN Agencies will also work with the Ministry of Industry on pre-feasibility studies for certain food products that have scalability potential in order to provide Agro Food manufacturing companies with the needed knowledge and information, to set-up manufacturing facilities that meet Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and Hygiene requirements for production and specific product requirements. This step is critical to ensure that agro-food manufacturing facilities are ready to export products which can be competitive internationally and to optimize the entry of end products to international markets.

- **Proficiency testing:** handling, on behalf of COLIBAC (the Lebanese Accreditation Council, which is still not operational), the participation of Lebanese laboratories for free in proficiency testing organized by ARAC (the Arab Regional Accreditation Council) and related to heavy metals, pesticides residues, aflatoxins and dioxins in food;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Inspection of food industries:</b> is carried out at routine and risk based basis (additives, colorants, starch and nonsolid fat in milk and milk products...)</li> </ul>
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**Participation and access to information during the Food Systems Summit:**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Ministry of Industry input</b>
7-To what extent was the information on the summit accessible, clear and practical for you and your community and partners?	We are not aware of this information
8- In what ways have you participated in the Summit (events, dialogues, submission of inputs etc.)?	We haven't participated in the summit
9- To what extent would you consider your participation in the FSS as active and meaningful? Please explain	Food safety tackles the whole food chain. Since our mandate is the whole industrial sector including food industry, therefore our participation is highly relevant in issues related to food safety for the food industries.